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APPENDIX II

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Index by country and subject of the Verbatim Records

Verbatim Records of the 1997 session

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0. Organizational matters

1. Agenda, organization of work and procedures

Chronological		Alphabetical	
PV	Country/Speaker	Country/Speaker	PV
751	Republic of Korea (President)	Algeria	753
	Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament		770
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Argentina	767
			776
	Malaysia (non-member State)		
	Myanmar	Australia	753
	Finland		764
	Poland (Outgoing President)		767
	Canada		768
	Morocco		777
752	France	Austria	770
	Germany		
	Egypt	Austria (Special Coordinator on the Expansion of the Conference	776
	Bangladesh		
	Republic of Korea (President)		
	Indonesia (as Coordinator of the Group of 21)	Bangladesh	752
			770
	Netherlands (on behalf of the Western Group)		773
	China	Brazil	755
	Morocco		770
	United States of America		
	Russian Federation	Bulgaria	776
753	Australia	Cameroon	773
	Pakistan		
	Algeria	Canada	751
	Japan		754
	Chile		763
	Sri Lanka		770
	Iran (Islamic Republic of)		
		Chile	753
754	Spain		762
	Canada		765
	Republic of Korea (President)		767
	Mexico		770
	Pakistan		
	Egypt	Chile (on behalf of Chile and Poland)	776
	India		
	United States of America		
	China	China	752
	France		754
	Netherlands		767

0. Organizational matters

1. Agenda, organization of work and procedures

(cont.)

Chronological		Alphabetical	
PV	Country/Speaker	Country/Speaker	PV
754 cont.	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	China (cont.)	770
			775
	Iran (Islamic Republic of)		776
755	Brazil	Colombia	770
	Iran (Islamic Republic of) (as Coordinator of the Group of 21)	Cuba	764
	Morocco		767
	Republic of Korea (President)		770
	Germany	Egypt	752
756	Romania (President)		754
	Poland		763
	Hungary		770
	Indonesia		
	Ireland (non-member State)	Egypt (Special Coordinator on the Improved and Effective Functioning of the Conference)	776
	Switzerland		
757	Slovakia		
	Romania (President)	Finland	751
			765
758	Romania (President)		767
	Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament		776
			777
	New Zealand (on behalf of the Western Group)	France	752
	Mexico		754
			767
760	Romania (President)		770
			775
761	Switzerland		776
	Iran (Islamic Republic of)		777
	Russian Federation (President)		778
762	Germany	Germany	752
	Chile		755
	Russian Federation (President)		762
	Iran (Islamic Republic of)		765
			767
763	Ukraine		770
	Egypt		776
	Japan		
	Canada	Hungary	756
	Russian Federation (President)		

0. Organizational matters

1. Agenda, organization of work and procedures

(cont.)

Chronological	
PV	Country/Speaker
764	India
	Poland
	Australia
	Morocco
	Cuba
	Russian Federation (President)
	Sri Lanka
	Nigeria
	Pakistan
765	Senegal (President)
	Sudan (non-member State)
	Germany
	Finland
	Chile
	Morocco
	Nigeria
	Poland
	Mexico
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
766	Russian Federation
	Kenya (as Coordinator of the Group of 21)
	South Africa
	Senegal (President)
767	Senegal
	Finland
	Kenya
	Morocco
	Chile
	Senegal (President)
	Argentina
	Syrian Arab Republic
	Mexico
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
	Turkey
	China
	Myanmar (as Coordinator of the Group of 21)
	India
	United States of America

Alphabetical	
Country/Speaker	PV
Hungary (Special Coordinator on the Review of the Agenda of the Conference)	776
India	754 764 767 770 775 778
Indonesia	756 777
Indonesia (as Coordinator of the Group of 21)	752
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	753 754 761 762 768 770
Iran (Islamic Republic of) (as Coordinator of the Group of 21)	755
Iraq	774 776
Israel	770 777
Italy	768
Japan	753 763 767 770 776
Kenya	767
Kenya (as Coordinator of the Group of 21)	766

0. Organizational matters

1. Agenda, organization of work and procedures

(cont.)

Chronological		Alphabetical	
PV	Country/Speaker	Country/Speaker	PV
767 cont.	Netherlands	Mexico	754
	Poland		758
	Cuba		765
	Australia		767
	Germany		768
	Republic of Korea		770
	Japan		771
	France		777
			778
768	Slovakia		
	Italy	Morocco	751
	Mexico		752
	Senegal (President)		755
	Australia		764
	Iran (Islamic Republic of)		765
			767
769	Slovakia (President)		776
	Sri Lanka		777
	United States of America		
	Syrian Arab Republic	Myanmar	751
770	Japan	Myanmar (as Coordinator of the Group of 21)	767
	Poland		770
	New Zealand		
	Chile	Netherlands	754
	Germany		767
	Cuba		770
	Slovakia (President)		
	Egypt	Netherlands (on behalf of the Western Group)	752
	India		
	Sri Lanka		
	Mexico	New Zealand	770
	United States of America		774
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	New Zealand (on behalf of the Western Group)	758
	Austria		
	Pakistan		
	France	Nigeria	764
	China		765
	Colombia		770
	Russian Federation		775
	Brazil		
	Israel	Nigeria (on behalf of the Group of 21)	773
	Peru		776

0. Organizational matters

1. Agenda, organization of work and procedures

(cont.)

Chronological	
PV	Country/Speaker
770 cont.	Myanmar (as Coordinator of the Group of 21)
	Canada
	Spain
	Bangladesh
	Algeria
	Iran (Islamic Republic of)
	Netherlands
	Nigeria
	Spain (on behalf of the Western Group)
771	Slovakia (President)
	Ukraine
	Syrian Arab Republic
	Mexico
773	Cameroon
	Nigeria (on behalf of the Group of 21)
	Bangladesh
	Syrian Arab Republic
774	New Zealand
	Iraq
	Slovakia (President)
775	Sri Lanka (President)
	Nigeria
	United States of America
	France
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
	India
	China
776	Sri Lanka (President)
	Egypt (Special Coordinator on the Improved and Effective Functioning of the Conference)
	Austria (Special Coordinator on the expansion of the membership of the Conference)

Alphabetical	
Country/Speaker	PV
Pakistan	753
	754
	764
	770
	776
	777
Peru	770
Poland	756
	764
	765
	767
	770
Poland (Outgoing President)	751
Republic of Korea	767
Republic of Korea (President)	751
	752
	754
	755
Romania	776
Romania (President)	756
	757
	758
	760
Russian Federation	752
	766
	770
	778
Russian Federation (President)	761
	762
	763
	764
Senegal	767

0. Organizational matters

1. Agenda, organization of work and procedures

(cont.)

Chronological	
PV	Country/Speaker
776 cont.	Hungary (Special Coordinator on the Review of the Agenda of the Conference)
	Germany
	Iraq
	Chile (on behalf of Chile and Poland)
	Finland
	Turkey
	Romania
	Japan
	Morocco
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
	Slovakia
	Bulgaria
	Nigeria (on behalf of the Group of 21)
	China
	Pakistan
	Venezuela
	United States of America
	Argentina
	Spain
	Syrian Arab Republic
	France
777	Israel
	Indonesia
	Australia
	Mexico
	Pakistan
	Finland
	Morocco
	France
	Sri Lanka (President)
778	Sri Lanka (President)
	India
	Mexico
	France
	Syrian Arab Republic
	Russian Federation
	United States of America

Alphabetical	
Country/Speaker	PV
Senegal (President)	765
	766
	767
	768
Slovakia	757
	768
	776
Slovakia (President)	769
	770
	771
	774
South Africa	766
Spain	754
	770
	776
Spain (on behalf of the Western Group)	770
Sri Lanka	753
	764
	769
	770
Sri Lanka (President)	775
	776
	777
	778
Switzerland	756
	761
Syrian Arab Republic	767
	769
	771
	773
	776
	778
Turkey	767
	776

0. Organizational matters

1. Agenda, organization of work and procedures

(cont.)

Chronological		Alphabetical	
PV	Country/Speaker	Country/Speaker	PV
		Ukraine	763 771
		United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	751 754 765 767 770 775 776
		United States of America	752 754 767 769 770 775 776 778
		Venezuela	776
		Non-member States	
		Ireland	756
		Malaysia	751
		Sudan	765
		Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament	751 758

0. Organizational matters
2. Participation of non-member States

Chronological		Alphabetical	
PV	Country/Speaker	Country/Speaker	PV
751	Republic of Korea (President)	Republic of Korea (President)	751 752 753 754
752	Republic of Korea (President)	Romania (President)	756 757
753	Republic of Korea (President)	Russian Federation (President)	762
754	Republic of Korea (President) Spain	Senegal (President)	767
756	Romania (President)	Slovakia (President)	770
757	Romania (President)	Spain	754
762	Russian Federation (President)		
767	Senegal (President)		
770	Slovakia (President)		

0. Organizational matters

3. Membership of the Conference on Disarmament

Chronological		Alphabetical	
PV	Country/Speaker	Country/Speaker	PV
751	Republic of Korea (President)	Argentina	767
	Italy		
	Malaysia (non-member State)	Austria	770
	Finland		
	Poland (Outgoing President)	Austria (Special Coordinator on the Expansion of the Membership of the Conference)	776
752	Germany		
753	Secretary-General of the United Nations	Cameroon	773
	Japan	Chile	767
			770
754	Spain		
		Colombia	770
755	Republic of Korea (President)		
		Egypt (Special Coordinator on the Improved and Effective Functioning of the Conference)	776
756	Romania (President)		
	New Zealand		
	Poland		
	Ireland (non-member State)	Finland	751
			767
757	Slovakia		777
758	Cyprus (non-member State)	France	776
761	Italy	Germany	752
	Iran (Islamic Republic of)		770
			776
763	Ukraine		
	Morocco	India	767
			770
764	Russian Federation (President)		
		Iran (Islamic Republic of)	761
766	Kenya (as Coordinator of the Group of 21)		
		Iraq	774
767	Senegal	Israel	777
	Finland		
	Morocco	Italy	751
	Chile		761
	Senegal (President)		768
	Argentina		
	Malaysia (non-member State)	Japan	753
	Czech Republic (non-member State)		770

0. Organizational matters

3. Membership of the Conference on Disarmament

(cont.)

Chronological		Alphabetical	
PV	Country/Speaker	Country/Speaker	PV
767 cont.	Ireland (non-member State) Turkey India	Kenya (as Coordinator of the Group of 21)	766
	Netherlands	Mexico	770
	Syrian Arab Republic		777
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Morocco	763 767
768	Slovakia		
	Italy	Netherlands	767 773
769	Slovakia (President)		
	United States of America	New Zealand	756 770
770	Japan		774
	Poland		
	New Zealand	Nigeria (on behalf of the Group of 21)	773
	Chile		
	Germany		
	Sri Lanka	Pakistan	776
	Colombia		
	Slovakia (President)	Poland	756
	Ireland (non-member State)		770
	Mexico		
	Austria	Poland (Outgoing President)	751
	Greece (non-member State)		
	India	Republic of Korea (President)	751 755
771	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Romania (President)	756
773	Netherlands	Russian Federation (President)	764
	Cameroon		
	Nigeria (on behalf of the Group of 21)	Senegal	767
		Senegal (President)	767
774	New Zealand		
	Iraq	Slovakia	757
	Kazakhstan (non-member State)		768
	Slovakia (President)		
		Slovakia (President)	769
776	Sri Lanka (President)		770
	Egypt (Special Coordinator on the Improved and Effective Functioning of the Conference)		774

0. Organizational matters

3. Membership of the Conference on Disarmament

(cont.)

Chronological		Alphabetical	
PV	Country/Speaker	Country/Speaker	PV
776 cont.	Austria (Special Coordinator on the Expansion of the Membership of the Conference)	Spain	754
	Germany	Sri Lanka	770
	Turkey Pakistan	Sri Lanka (President)	776
	France	Syrian Arab Republic	767
777	Israel Ireland (non-member State) Mexico	Turkey	767 776
	Finland	Ukraine	763
		United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	767 771
		United States of America	769
		Non-member States	
		Cyprus	758
		Czech Republic	767
		Greece	770
		Ireland	756 767 770 777
		Kazakhstan	774
		Malaysia	751 767
		Secretary-General of the United Nations	753

0. Organizational matters

4. Review of the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament

Chronological		Alphabetical	
PV	Country/Speaker	Country/Speaker	PV
751	Republic of Korea (President)	Australia	753
	Malaysia (non-member State)		
	Poland (Outgoing President)	Cameroon	773
753	Australia	Colombia	770
	Pakistan		
		Finland	767
756	Romania (President)		777
	Poland		
		France	776
758	Mexico		
		Germany	776
766	Kenya (as Coordinator of the Group of 21)	Hungary	770
767	Finland	Hungary (Special Coordinator on the Review of the Agenda of the Conference)	776
	Turkey		
770	New Zealand		
	Sri Lanka	India	770
	Colombia		
	Slovakia (President)	Kenya (as Coordinator of the Group of 21)	766
	United States of America		
	Hungary		
	India	Mexico	758
	Mexico		770
			777
771	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Netherlands	773
773	Netherlands	New Zealand	770
	Cameroon		774
	Nigeria (on behalf of the Group of 21)	Nigeria (on behalf of the Group of 21)	773
	Slovakia (President)		
774	New Zealand	Pakistan	753
	Slovakia (President)		776
776	Sri Lanka (President)	Poland	756
	Hungary (Special Coordinator on the Review of the Agenda of the Conference)	Poland (Outgoing President)	751
	Germany	Republic of Korea (President)	751

0. Organizational matters

4. Review of the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament

(cont.)

Chronological		Alphabetical	
PV	Country/Speaker	Country/Speaker	PV
776	Turkey	Romania (President)	756
cont.	Pakistan		
	France	Slovakia (President)	770
			773
777	Mexico		774
	Finland		
		Sri Lanka	770
		Sri Lanka (President)	776
		Turkey	767
			776
		United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	771
		United States of America	770
		Non-member State	
		Malaysia	751

0. Organizational matters

5. Improved and effective functioning of the Conference on Disarmament

Chronological	
PV	Country/Speaker
751	Malaysia (non-member State)
753	Chile
756	New Zealand Ireland (non-member State)
763	Morocco
764	Morocco
766	Kenya (as Coordinator of the Group of 21)
767	Finland Turkey
769	United States of America
770	Japan Poland Germany Egypt Sri Lanka Colombia United States of America Slovakia (President) India Mexico
771	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
772	United States of America
773	Netherlands Cameroon Nigeria (on behalf of the Group of 21) Slovakia (President)
774	New Zealand Slovakia (President)

Alphabetical	
Country/Speaker	PV
Austria (Special Coordinator on the Expansion of the Membership of the Conference)	776
Brazil	776
Cameroon	773
Chile	753
Colombia	770
Egypt	770
Egypt (Special Coordinator on the Improved and Effective Functioning of the Conference)	776
Finland	767 777
France	776
Germany	770 776
India	770
Japan	770
Kenya (as Coordinator of the Group of 21)	766
Mexico	770 777
Morocco	763 764
Netherlands	773
New Zealand	756 774

0. Organizational matters

5. Improved and effective functioning of the Conference on Disarmament

(cont.)

Chronological		Alphabetical	
PV	Country/Speaker	Country/Speaker	PV
776	Sri Lanka (President)	Nigeria (on behalf of the Group of 21)	773
	Egypt (Special Coordinator on the Improved and Effective Functioning of the Conference)	Pakistan	776
	Austria (Special Coordinator on the Expansion of the Conference)	Poland	770
	Germany	Slovakia (President)	770
	Brazil		773
	Turkey		774
	Pakistan		
	United States of America	Sri Lanka	770
	France		
		Sri Lanka (President)	776
777	Mexico		
	Finland	Turkey	767
			776
		United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	771
		United States of America	769
			770
			772
			776
		Non-member States	
		Ireland	756
		Malaysia	751

I. Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament

Chronological		Alphabetical	
PV	Country/Speaker	Country/Speaker	PV
751	Republic of Korea (President)	Algeria	753
	Italy		
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Australia	753
	Malaysia (non-member State)	Austria	760
	Myanmar		
	Finland	Bangladesh	752
	United States of America		771
	Canada		
		Brazil	755
752	France		767
	Germany		770
	Egypt		
	Bangladesh	Cameroon	773
753	Secretary-General of the United Nations	Canada	751
			754
	Australia		763
	Pakistan		
	Algeria	Chile	753
	Japan		767
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland		770
	Chile	Cuba	767
	Sri Lanka		770
	Iran (Islamic Republic of)		
		Egypt	752
754	Spain		754
	Syrian Arab Republic		763
	Canada		770
	Republic of Korea (President)		
	Pakistan	Finland	751
	Egypt		767
	India		
	United States of America	France	752
	France		754
	Netherlands		
	Mexico	Germany	752
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland		770
			776
755	Brazil	Hungary	756
	Japan		
	Republic of Korea (President)	Hungary (Special Coordinator on the Review of the Agenda of the Conference)	776

I. Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament (cont.)

Chronological		Alphabetical	
PV	Country/Speaker	Country/Speaker	PV
756	Romania (President)	India	754
	New Zealand		764
	Poland		770
	Hungary		
	Indonesia	Indonesia	756
	Ireland (non-member State)		777
757	Slovakia	Iran (Islamic Republic of)	753
	Romania (President)		761
			770
758	Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament	Iraq	774
	Mexico		776
759	Sweden	Israel	777
760	Austria	Italy	751
			768
761	Norway		
	Iran (Islamic Republic of)	Japan	753
	United States of America		755
			763
763	United States of America		770
	Ukraine		
	Egypt	Kenya	767
	Japan		
	Morocco	Kenya (as Coordinator of the Group of 21)	766
	Canada		
764	India	Mexico	754
	Poland		758
	Russian Federation (President)		768
			770
765	Senegal (President)		
		Morocco	763
766	Russian Federation		
	Turkey	Myanmar	751
	Kenya (as Coordinator of the Group of 21)	Myanmar (as Coordinator of the Group of 21)	767
	South Africa		
767	Senegal	Netherlands	754
	Finland		
	Kenya	New Zealand	756
	Brazil		770
			774

I. Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament (cont.)

Chronological	
PV	Country/Speaker
767 cont.	Chile
	Ireland (non-member State)
	Myanmar (as Coordinator of the Group of 21)
	Cuba
768	Slovakia
	Italy
	Mexico
769	Slovakia (President)
	United States of America
770	Japan
	Poland
	New Zealand
	Brazil
	Germany
	Cuba
	Egypt
	Chile
	India
	Pakistan
	Iran (Islamic Republic of)
	Mexico
	Nigeria
	United States of America
771	Bangladesh
772	United States of America
773	Cameroon
	Nigeria (on behalf of the Group of 21)
774	New Zealand
	Iraq
775	Sri Lanka (President)
776	Hungary (Special Coordinator on the Review of the Agenda of the Conference)
	Germany
	Iraq

Alphabetical	
Country/Speaker	PV
Nigeria	770
Nigeria (on behalf of the Group of 21)	773
Norway	761
Pakistan	753
	754
	770
	777
Poland	756
	764
	770
Republic of Korea (President)	751
	754
	755
Romania (President)	756
	757
Russian Federation	766
Russian Federation (President)	764
Senegal	767
Senegal (President)	765
Slovakia	757
	768
Slovakia (President)	769
South Africa	766
Spain	754
Sri Lanka	753
Sri Lanka (President)	775
Sweden	759

I. Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament (cont.)

Chronological		Alphabetical	
PV	Country/Speaker	Country/Speaker	PV
777	Israel	Syrian Arab Republic	754
	Ireland (non-member State)		
	Indonesia	Turkey	766
	Pakistan		
		Ukraine	763
778	United States of America		
		United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	751 753 754
		United States of America	751 754 761 763 769 770 772 778
		Non-member States	
		Ireland	756 767 777
		Malaysia	751
		Secretary-General of the United Nations	753
		Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament	758

I. Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament

- Proposals for the "Prohibition of the Production of Fissile Material for Nuclear Weapons or Other Nuclear Explosive Devices

Chronological		Alphabetical	
PV	Country/Speaker	Country/Speaker	PV
751	Republic of Korea (President)	Algeria	753
	Italy	Australia	753
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Austria	760
	Malaysia (non-member State)		770
	Myanmar	Bangladesh	752
	Finland	Brazil	755
	United States of America		770
	Canada	Canada	751
752	France		754
	Germany		763
	Egypt		770
	Bangladesh	Chile	753
753	Secretary-General of the United Nations		767
	Australia	Egypt	752
	Pakistan		754
	Algeria		763
	Japan		770
	Chile	Finland	751
	Sri Lanka		767
	Iran (Islamic Republic of)		777
754	Spain	France	752
	Canada		754
	Republic of Korea (President)		770
	Egypt	Germany	752
	France		762
	Netherlands		770
	Mexico		776
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Hungary	756
755	Brazil	Hungary (Special Coordinator on the Review of the Agenda of the Conference)	776
	Japan		
	Republic of Korea (President)		
756	Romania (President)		
	New Zealand		
	Poland		

I. Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament

- Proposals for the "Prohibition of the Production of Fissile Material for Nuclear Weapons or Other Nuclear Explosive Devices

(cont.)

Chronological	
PV	Country/Speaker
756 cont.	Hungary
	Indonesia
	Ireland (non-member State)
	Switzerland
757	Slovakia
	Romania (President)
758	Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament
	Cyprus (non-member State)
	Mexico
759	Sweden
760	Austria
761	Norway
	Switzerland
762	Germany
763	United States of America
	Ukraine
	Egypt
	Japan
	Morocco
	Canada
764	India
	Poland
766	Russian Federation
	Turkey
767	Finland
	Kenya

Alphabetical	
Country/Speaker	PV
India	764
	770
	778
Indonesia	756
	777
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	753
	770
Iraq	774
Italy	751
	768
Japan	753
	755
	763
	770
Kenya	767
Mexico	754
	758
	770
Mexico (on behalf of Algeria, Bangladesh, Brazil, Cameroon, Colombia, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Egypt, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Kenya, Mexico, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Senegal, Sri Lanka, Syrian Arab Republic, Venezuela, Viet Nam and Zimbabwe)	767
Morocco	763
Myanmar	751

I. Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament

- Proposals for the "Prohibition of the Production of Fissile Material for Nuclear Weapons or Other Nuclear Explosive Devices

(cont.)

Chronological	
PV	Country/Speaker
767 cont.	Mexico (on behalf of Algeria, Bangladesh, Brazil, Cameroon, Colombia, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Egypt, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Kenya, Mexico, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Senegal, Sri Lanka, Syrian Arab Republic, Venezuela, Viet Nam and Zimbabwe)
	Chile
	Ireland (non-member State)
	Turkey
768	Slovakia
	Italy
769	United States of America
770	Japan
	Poland
	New Zealand
	Germany
	Austria
	India
	France
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
	Sri Lanka
	Canada
	United States of America
	Egypt
	Pakistan
	Brazil
	Iran (Islamic Republic of)
	Mexico
	Slovakia (President)
771	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Alphabetical	
Country/Speaker	PV
Netherlands	754
New Zealand	756 770 774
Norway	761
Pakistan	753 770 777
Poland	756 764 770
Republic of Korea (President)	751 754 755
Romania (President)	756 757
Russian Federation	766
Slovakia	757 768
Slovakia (President)	770
Spain	754
Sri Lanka	753 770
Sri Lanka (President)	775
Sweden	759
Switzerland	756 761

I. Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament
- Proposals for the "Prohibition of the Production of Fissile Material for Nuclear Weapons or Other Nuclear Explosive Devices

(cont.)

Chronological	
PV	Country/Speaker
772	United States of America
774	New Zealand
	Iraq
775	Sri Lanka (President)
	United States of America
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
776	Hungary (Special Coordinator on the Review of the Agenda of the Conference)
	Germany
	United States of America
777	Ireland (non-member State)
	Indonesia
	Pakistan
	Finland
778	India
	United States of America

Alphabetical	
Country/Speaker	PV
Turkey	766
	767
Ukraine	763
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	751
	754
	770
	771
	775
United States of America	751
	763
	769
	770
	772
	775
	776
	778
Non-member States	
Cyprus	758
Ireland	756
	767
	777
Malaysia	751
Secretary-General of the United Nations	753
Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament	758

I. Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament
- Proposals for the "Cessation of the Nuclear Arms Race and Nuclear Disarmament"

Chronological		Alphabetical	
PV	Country/Speaker	Country/Speaker	PV
751	Malaysia (non-member State)	Algeria	753
	Myanmar		770
752	Egypt	Bangladesh	752
	Bangladesh		
		Brazil	755
753	Pakistan		767
	Algeria		770
	Chile		
	Sri Lanka	Cameroon	773
	Iran (Islamic Republic of)		
		Canada	763
754	Syrian Arab Republic		
	Egypt	Chile	753
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland		762
			767
755	Brazil	Colombia	770
	Japan		
		Cuba	770
756	New Zealand		
	Indonesia	Egypt	752
	Ireland (non-member State)		754
			763
758	Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament		770
	Mexico	India	764
			770
762	Chile		775
763	Ukraine	Indonesia	756
	Egypt		
	Japan	Iran (Islamic Republic of)	753
	Morocco		770
	Canada		
		Iraq	774
764	India		
	Russian Federation (President)	Japan	755
			763
765	Senegal (President)		
		Kenya	767
766	Kenya (as Coordinator of the Group of 21)		
		Kenya (as Coordinator of the Group of 21)	766

I. Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament

- Proposals for the "Cessation of the Nuclear Arms Race and Nuclear Disarmament"

(cont.)

Chronological		Alphabetical	
PV	Country/Speaker	Country/Speaker	PV
767	Senegal	Mexico	758
	Kenya		768
	Mexico (on behalf of Algeria, Bangladesh, Brazil, Cameroon, Colombia, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Egypt, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Kenya, Mexico, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Senegal, Sri Lanka, Syrian Arab Republic, Venezuela, Viet Nam and Zimbabwe)		770
		Mexico (on behalf of Algeria, Bangladesh, Brazil, Cameroon, Colombia, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Egypt, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Kenya, Mexico, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Senegal, Sri Lanka, Syrian Arab Republic, Venezuela, Viet Nam and Zimbabwe)	767
	Brazil		
	Chile		
	Turkey		
		Morocco	763
768	Mexico		
		Myanmar	751
770	Cuba		
	Egypt	Myanmar (as Coordinator of the Group of 21)	770
	India		
	Sri Lanka		
	Mexico	New Zealand	756
	Pakistan		
	Colombia	Nigeria	770
	Myanmar (as Coordinator of the Group of 21)		
		Nigeria (on behalf of the Group of 21)	773
	Slovakia (President)		
	Spain (on behalf of the Western Group)		
		Pakistan	753
	Iran (Islamic Republic of)		770
	Brazil		777
	Nigeria		
	Algeria	Russian Federation (President)	764
772	United States of America	Senegal	767
773	Cameroon	Senegal (President)	765
	Nigeria (on behalf of the Group of 21)		
		Slovakia (President)	770

I. Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament
- Proposals for the "Cessation of the Nuclear Arms Race and Nuclear Disarmament"

(cont.)

Chronological		Alphabetical	
PV	Country/Speaker	Country/Speaker	PV
774	Iraq	Spain (on behalf of the Western Group)	770
775	India	Sri Lanka	753 770
777	Ireland (non-member State) Pakistan	Syrian Arab Republic	754
		Turkey	767
		Ukraine	763
		United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	754
		United States of America	772
		Non-member States	
		Ireland	756 777
		Malaysia	751
		Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament	758

II. Prevention of nuclear war, including all related matters

Chronological		Alphabetical	
PV	Country/Speaker	Country/Speaker	PV
754	Egypt	Egypt	754
776	Hungary (Special Coordinator on the Review of the Agenda of the Conference)	Hungary (Special Coordinator on the Review of the Agenda of the Conference)	776

III. Prevention of an arms race in outer space

Chronological		Alphabetical	
PV	Country/Speaker	Country/Speaker	PV
751	Republic of Korea (President)	Bangladesh	773
	Myanmar		
	Canada	Canada	751
			763
752	Egypt		
		Chile	753
753	Chile		762
	Sri Lanka		
		China	754
754	China		770
			775
756	Romania (President)		
		Colombia	770
762	Chile		
		Cuba	770
763	Canada		
		Egypt	752
764	India		770
766	Kenya (as Coordinator of the Group of 21)	Germany	770
767	Turkey	Hungary (Special Coordinator on the Review of the Agenda of the Conference)	776
770	Germany		
	Cuba	India	764
	Egypt		770
	Sri Lanka		775
	Pakistan		
	Mexico	Iran (Islamic Republic of)	770
	Colombia		
	China	Iraq	774
	India		776
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Kenya (as Coordinator of the Group of 21)	766
	Netherlands		
	Slovakia (President)		
	United States of America	Mexico	770
	Iran (Islamic Republic of)		
		Myanmar	751
773	Nigeria (on behalf of the Group of 21)	Netherlands	770
	Bangladesh		
	Syrian Arab Republic	Nigeria (on behalf of the Group of 21)	773

III. Prevention of an arms race in outer space

(cont.)

Chronological		Alphabetical	
PV	Country/Speaker	Country/Speaker	PV
774	Iraq	Pakistan	770
775	United States of America India	Republic of Korea (President)	751
	China Sri Lanka (President)	Romania (President)	756
		Slovakia (President)	770
776	Hungary (Special Coordinator on the Review of the Agenda of the Conference) Iraq	Sri Lanka	753 770
		Sri Lanka (President)	775
		Syrian Arab Republic	773
		Turkey	767
		United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	770
		United States of America	770 775

IV. Effective international agreements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons

Chronological		Alphabetical	
PV	Country/Speaker	Country/Speaker	PV
751	Republic of Korea (President)	Algeria	753
	Italy		
	Myanmar	Austria	770
752	Germany	Bangladesh	770
	Egypt		773
753	Secretary-General of the United Nations	Canada	763
			770
	Pakistan		
	Algeria	Chile	753
	Chile		762
	Sri Lanka		
	Iran (Islamic Republic of)	China	754
			770
754	Syrian Arab Republic		775
	Pakistan		
	Egypt	Colombia	770
	China		
		Cuba	770
756	Romania (President)		
	Poland	Egypt	752
			754
761	Iran (Islamic Republic of)		763
			770
762	Chile		
		France	770
763	Egypt		775
	Canada		
		Germany	752
766	Russian Federation		770
	Kenya (as Coordinator of the Group of 21)	Hungary (Special Coordinator on the Review of the Agenda of the Conference)	776
	South Africa		
767	Senegal		
	Kenya	India	770
	Turkey		
		Indonesia	777
768	Italy		
		Iran (Islamic Republic of)	753
770	Germany		761
	Cuba		770
	Egypt		
	Sri Lanka		

IV. Effective international agreements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons (cont.)

Chronological		Alphabetical	
PV	Country/Speaker	Country/Speaker	PV
770	Pakistan	Iraq	774
cont.	Colombia		776
	Slovakia (President)		
	Canada	Italy	751
	India		768
	Spain		
	Bangladesh	Kenya	767
	France		
	United States of America	Kenya (as Coordinator of the Group of 21)	766
	China		
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland		
		Mexico	770
	Iran (Islamic Republic of)		
	Mexico	Myanmar	751
	Netherlands		
	Nigeria	Netherlands	770
	Austria		
		Nigeria	770
771	Ukraine		
		Nigeria (on behalf of the Group of 21)	773
773	Nigeria (on behalf of the Group of 21)		
	Bangladesh	Pakistan	753
	Syrian Arab Republic		754
			770
774	Iraq		
		Poland	756
775	United States of America		
	France	Republic of Korea (President)	751
	South Africa		
	China	Romania (President)	756
	Sri Lanka (President)		
		Russian Federation	766
776	Hungary (Special Coordinator on the Review of the Agenda of the Conference)	Senegal	767
	Iraq	Slovakia (President)	770
777	Indonesia	South Africa	766
			775
		Spain	770
		Sri Lanka	753
			770

IV. Effective international agreements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons (cont.)

Chronological		Alphabetical	
PV	Country/Speaker	Country/Speaker	PV
		Sri Lanka (President)	775
		Syrian Arab Republic	754 773
		Turkey	767
		Ukraine	771
		United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	770
		United States of America	770 775
		Secretary-General of the United Nations	753

V. New types of weapons of mass destruction and new systems of such weapons; radiological weapons

Chronological		Alphabetical	
PV	Country/Speaker	Country/Speaker	PV
752	Egypt	Egypt	752
754	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Hungary (Special Coordinator on the Review of the Agenda of the Conference)	776
770	India	India	770
776	Hungary (Special Coordinator on the Review of the Agenda of the Conference)	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	754

VI. Comprehensive programme of disarmament

Chronological		Alphabetical	
PV	Country/Speaker	Country/Speaker	PV
752	Egypt	Chile	770
761	Iran (Islamic Republic of)	Egypt	752
768	Mexico	Hungary (Special Coordinator on the Review of the Agenda of the Conference)	776
770	Chile	Iran (Islamic Republic of)	761
776	Hungary (Special Coordinator on the Review of the Agenda of the Conference)	Mexico	768

VI. Comprehensive programme of disarmament
- Proposals for "a possible mandate on the question of anti-personnel landmines"

Chronological	
PV	Country/Speaker
751	Republic of Korea (President)
	Italy
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
	Myanmar
	Finland
	United States of America
	Canada
752	France
	Austria
	Germany
	Egypt
	Belgium
753	Secretary-General of the United Nations
	Australia
	Pakistan
	Japan
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
	Chile
	Sri Lanka
	Iran (Islamic Republic of)
754	Spain
	Syrian Arab Republic
	Canada
	Republic of Korea (President)
	Mexico
	United States of America
	China
	France
	Netherlands
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
755	Brazil
	Republic of Korea (President)
756	Romania (President)
	New Zealand

Alphabetical	
Country/Speaker	PV
Argentina	767 775 776
Australia	753 764 767 768 777
Australia (Special Coordinator to Conduct Consultations on a Possible Mandate on the Question of Anti-personnel Landmines under Agenda Item 6)	774 776
Austria	752 760 770
Bangladesh	770
Belgium	752 766
Brazil	755
Bulgaria	776
Cameroon	773
Canada	751 754 762 763 770
Chile	753 762 763 765 767 770 775

VI. Comprehensive programme of disarmament - Proposals for "a possible mandate on the question of anti-personnel landmines" (cont.)

Chronological	
PV	Country/Speaker
756 cont.	Poland
	Hungary
	Indonesia
	Ireland (non-member State)
	Switzerland
757	Slovakia
	Finland
	Romania (President)
758	Cyprus (non-member State)
	Mexico
759	Sweden
760	Austria
761	Norway
762	Germany
	Finland (on behalf of Chile, Finland and Poland)
	Canada
	Chile
763	United States of America
	Ukraine
	Japan
	Japan (on behalf of Hungary and Japan)
	Hungary
	Morocco
	Canada
	Chile
	Italy
	Kenya (on behalf of the Group of 21)
764	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
	India
	Poland
	Australia

Alphabetical	
Country/Speaker	PV
Chile (on behalf of Chile and Poland)	776
China	754
	767
	770
	775
	776
Colombia	770
Cuba	770
Egypt	752
	770
Finland	751
	757
	765
	767
	770
	776
	777
Finland (on behalf of Chile, Finland and Poland)	762
France	752
	754
	767
	770
	776
Germany	752
	762
	765
	767
	770
	776
Hungary	756
	763

VI. Comprehensive programme of disarmament
- Proposals for "a possible mandate on the question of anti-personnel landmines"
(cont.)

Chronological		Alphabetical	
PV	Country/Speaker	Country/Speaker	PV
764 cont.	Nigeria	Hungary (Special Coordinator on the Review of the Agenda of the Conference)	776
	Pakistan		
	Russian Federation (President)		
765	Senegal (President)	India	764 767 770
	Sudan (non-member State)		
	Germany		
	Finland		
	Chile	Indonesia	756 777
	Morocco		
	Nigeria		
	Poland	Iran (Islamic Republic of)	753 770
	Mexico		
766	Russian Federation	Iraq	774
	Turkey		
	Belgium	Israel	777
	Kenya (as Coordinator of the Group of 21)	Italy	751 763 768
	Senegal (President)		
767	Senegal		
	Finland	Japan	753 763 767 770 776
	Kenya		
	Chile		
	Senegal (President)		
	Argentina		
	Syrian Arab Republic		
	Mexico	Japan (on behalf of Hungary and Japan)	763
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland		
	Ireland (non-member State)	Kenya	767
	Turkey		
	China		
	Myanmar (as Coordinator of the Group of 21)	Kenya (as Coordinator of the Group of 21)	763 766
	India	Mexico	754 758 765 767 768 770 777 778
	United States of America		
	Netherlands		
	Poland		
	Australia		
	Germany		
	Republic of Korea		

VI. Comprehensive programme of disarmament
- Proposals for "a possible mandate on the question of anti-personnel landmines"
(cont.)

Chronological		Alphabetical	
PV	Country/Speaker	Country/Speaker	PV
767	Japan	Morocco	763
cont.	France		765
	Morocco		767
			776
768	Slovakia		
	Italy	Myanmar	751
	Mexico		
	Senegal (President)	Myanmar (as Coordinator of the Group of 21)	767
	Australia		
769	United States of America	Netherlands	754
	Slovakia (President)		767
			770
770	Slovakia (President)		773
	Japan		
	Poland	New Zealand	756
	New Zealand		770
	China		774
	Germany		
	Cuba	Nigeria	764
	Canada		765
	Egypt		770
	Norway		
	India	Nigeria (on behalf of the Group of 21)	773
	Sri Lanka		776
	Mexico		
	United States of America	Norway	761
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland		770
	Finland	Pakistan	753
	Austria		764
	Pakistan		770
	France		776
	Colombia		777
	Chile		
	Spain	Poland	756
	Bangladesh		764
	Russian Federation		765
	Iran (Islamic Republic of)		767
	Netherlands		770
	Nigeria		
	Ireland (non-member State)	Republic of Korea	767

VI. Comprehensive programme of disarmament

- Proposals for "a possible mandate on the question of anti-personnel landmines" (cont.)

Chronological	
PV	Country/Speaker
771	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland Ukraine Syrian Arab Republic
772	United States of America
773	Netherlands Cameroon Nigeria (on behalf of the Group of 21)
774	New Zealand Iraq Australia (Special Coordinator to Conduct Consultations on a Possible Mandate on the Question of Anti-personnel Landmines under Agenda Item 6) Kazakhstan (non-member State) Syrian Arab Republic Slovakia (President)
775	Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament United States of America Chile Argentina United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland China
776	Sri Lanka (President) Hungary (Special Coordinator on the Review of the Agenda of the Conference) Australia (Special Coordinator to Conduct Consultations on a Possible Mandate on the Question of Anti-personnel Landmines under Agenda Item 6) Germany Chile (on behalf of Chile and Poland)

Alphabetical	
Country/Speaker	PV
Republic of Korea (President)	751 754 755
Romania	776
Romania (President)	756 757
Russian Federation	766 770
Russian Federation (President)	764
Senegal	767
Senegal (President)	765 766 767 768
Slovakia	757 768 776
Slovakia (President)	769 770 774
Spain	754 770 776
Sri Lanka	753 770
Sri Lanka (President)	776
Sweden	759
Switzerland	756
Syrian Arab Republic	754 767

VI. Comprehensive programme of disarmament
- Proposals for "a possible mandate on the question of anti-personnel landmines"
(cont.)

Chronological		Alphabetical	
PV	Country/Speaker	Country/Speaker	PV
776	Finland	Syrian Arab Republic (cont.)	771
cont.	Turkey		774
	Romania		776
	Japan		
	Morocco	Turkey	766
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland		767
			776
	Slovakia		
	Bulgaria	Ukraine	763
	Nigeria (on behalf of the Group of 21)		771
	China	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	751
	Pakistan		753
	Venezuela		754
	United States of America		764
	Argentina		767
	Spain		770
	Syrian Arab Republic		771
	France		775
			776
777	Israel		
	Ireland (non-member State)	United States of America	751
	Indonesia		754
	Australia		763
	Mexico		767
	Pakistan		769
	Finland		770
			772
778	Mexico		775
	United States of America		776
			778
		Venezuela	776
		Non-member States	
		Cyprus	758
		Ireland	756
			767
			770
			777

VI. Comprehensive programme of disarmament
- Proposals for "a possible mandate on the question of anti-personnel landmines"
(cont.)

Chronological		Alphabetical	
PV	Country/Speaker	Country/Speaker	PV
		Non-member States (cont.)	
		Kazakhstan	774
		Sudan	765
		Secretary-General of the United Nations	753
		Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament	775

VI. Transparency in armaments

Chronological	
PV	Country/Speaker
751	Republic of Korea (President) Myanmar Canada
752	Germany Egypt
753	Japan Sri Lanka Iran (Islamic Republic of)
754	China
755	Brazil
756	Romania (President) New Zealand Poland
761	Iran (Islamic Republic of)
762	Chile
763	Japan
766	Turkey Kenya (as Coordinator of the Group of 21)
767	Senegal Turkey
769	United States of America
770	Germany Sri Lanka Pakistan Colombia India United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland Netherlands Slovakia (President) Mexico Algeria

Alphabetical	
Country/Speaker	PV
Algeria	770
Brazil	755
Canada	751
Chile	762
China	754 770
Colombia	770
Egypt	752 770
Germany	752 770
Hungary (Special Coordinator on the Review of the Agenda of the Conference)	776
India	770
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	753 761
Iraq	774
Israel	777
Japan	753 763
Kenya (as Coordinator of the Group of 21)	766
Mexico	770
Myanmar	751
Netherlands	770
New Zealand	756

VI. Transparency in armaments
(cont.)

Chronological		Alphabetical	
PV	Country/Speaker	Country/Speaker	PV
770 cont.	China Egypt United States of America	Pakistan	770
		Poland	756
774	Iraq	Republic of Korea (President)	751
775	United States of America	Romania (President)	756
776	Hungary (Special Coordinator on the Review of the Agenda of the Conference)	Senegal	767
		Slovakia (President)	770
777	Israel	Sri Lanka	753 770
		Turkey	766 767
		United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	770
		United States of America	769 770 775

VIII. Consideration of other areas dealing with the cessation of the arms race, arms limitation and disarmament and other relevant matters:

1. The role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament

Chronological		Alphabetical	
PV	Country/Speaker	Country/Speaker	PV
752	Egypt	Egypt	752
768	Slovakia	Egypt (Special Coordinator on the Improved and Effective Functioning of the Conference)	776
769	Slovakia (President)		
774	New Zealand	New Zealand	774
776	Egypt (Special Coordinator on the Improved and Effective Functioning of the Conference)	Slovakia	768
		Slovakia (President)	769

VIII. Consideration of other areas dealing with the cessation of the arms race, arms limitation and disarmament and other relevant matters:

2. Special sessions of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament

Chronological		Alphabetical	
PV	Country/Speaker	Country/Speaker	PV
752	France Egypt	Algeria	753
753	Algeria Sri Lanka	Cuba	770
754	Syrian Arab Republic	Egypt	752 770
758	Mexico	France	752
764	India	Hungary (Special Coordinator on the Review of the Agenda of the Conference)	776
770	Cuba Egypt	India	764
774	Iraq	Indonesia	777
776	Hungary (Special Coordinator on the Review of the Agenda of the Conference) Pakistan	Iraq	774
777	Indonesia	Mexico	758
		Pakistan	776
		Sri Lanka	753
		Syrian Arab Republic	754

VIII. Consideration of other areas dealing with the cessation of the arms race, arms limitation and disarmament and other relevant matters:

3. Nuclear-weapon-free zones

Chronological		Alphabetical	
PV	Country/Speaker	Country/Speaker	PV
751	Italy	Brazil	755
			770
753	Iran (Islamic Republic of)		
		Canada	763
754	Syrian Arab Republic		
		Chile	770
755	Brazil		
		Egypt	763
756	New Zealand		
		France	775
763	Egypt		
	Japan	Iran (Islamic Republic of)	753
	Canada		
		Iraq	774
766	Russian Federation		
		Italy	751
768	Italy		768
770	Brazil	Japan	763
	Chile		
	United States of America	New Zealand	756
774	Iraq	Russian Federation	766
	Kazakhstan (non-member State)		
		Syrian Arab Republic	754
775	United States of America		
	France	United States of America	770
			775
		Non-member State	
		Kazakhstan	774

VIII. Consideration of other areas dealing with the cessation of the arms race, arms limitation and disarmament and other relevant matters:

4. Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (Treaty of Tlatelolco)

Chronological		Alphabetical	
PV	Country/Speaker	Country/Speaker	PV
753	Secretary-General of the United Nations	Austria	760
	Chile	Brazil	755 770
755	Brazil	Chile	753 770
756	Indonesia		
760	Austria	Indonesia	756
763	Japan	Japan	763
766	Russian Federation	Russian Federation	766
767	Senegal	Senegal	767
770	Brazil		
	Chile	Secretary-General of the United Nations	753

VIII. Consideration of other areas dealing with the cessation of the arms race, arms limitation and disarmament and other relevant matters:

5. South Pacific Nuclear-Free Zone Treaty (Treaty of Rarotonga)

Chronological		Alphabetical	
PV	Country/Speaker	Country/Speaker	PV
753	Secretary-General of the United Nations Chile	Austria	760
		Chile	753
756	Indonesia	Indonesia	756
760	Austria	Russian Federation	766
766	Russian Federation	Senegal	767
767	Senegal		
		Secretary-General of the United Nations	753

VIII. Consideration of other areas dealing with the cessation of the arms race, arms limitation and disarmament and other relevant matters:

6. Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty

Chronological		Alphabetical	
PV	Country/Speaker	Country/Speaker	PV
753	Secretary-General of the United Nations	Austria	760
	Chile	Chile	753
756	Indonesia	Indonesia	756
760	Austria	Russian Federation	776
766	Russian Federation	Secretary-General of the United Nations	753

VIII. Consideration of other areas dealing with the cessation of the arms race, arms limitation and disarmament and other relevant matters:

7. African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty (The Pelindaba Treaty)

Chronological		Alphabetical	
PV	Country/Speaker	Country/Speaker	PV
751	Republic of Korea (President)	Austria	760
752	Egypt	Chile	753
753	Secretary-General of the United Nations	Egypt	752
	Pakistan	Indonesia	756
	Chile	Kenya	767
756	Indonesia	Pakistan	753
760	Austria	Republic of Korea (President)	751
765	Senegal (President)	Russian Federation	766
766	Russian Federation	Senegal	767
767	Senegal	Senegal (President)	765
	Kenya	Secretary-General of the United Nations	753

VIII. Consideration of other areas dealing with the cessation of the arms race, arms limitation and disarmament and other relevant matters:

8. Zone exempt of all weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East

Chronological		Alphabetical	
PV	Country/Speaker	Country/Speaker	PV
752	Egypt	Egypt	752 763
754	Syrian Arab Republic	Iraq	774
763	Egypt	Israel	777
774	Iraq	Syrian Arab Republic	754
777	Israel		

VIII. Consideration of other areas dealing with the cessation of the arms race, arms limitation and disarmament and other relevant matters:

9. Non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction

Chronological		Alphabetical	
PV	Country/Speaker	Country/Speaker	PV
751	Italy	Algeria	753
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Australia	753
	Malaysia (non-member State)		
	United States of America	Brazil	755 770
	Canada		
752	France	Canada	751
	Germany		
	Egypt	Chile	770
753	Secretary-General of the United Nations	Egypt	752 763 770
	Australia		
	Pakistan		
	Algeria	Finland	767
	Japan		
	Sri Lanka	France	752
	Iran (Islamic Republic of)		
		Germany	752 776
755	Brazil		
756	Poland	Hungary	756
	Hungary		
	Indonesia	Hungary (Special Coordinator on the Review of the Agenda of the Conference)	776
	Ireland (non-member State)		
757	Slovakia		
		India	770
758	Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament	Indonesia	756
759	Sweden	Iran (Islamic Republic of)	753
761	Norway	Israel	777
	Switzerland		
		Italy	751
763	United States of America		
	Egypt	Japan	753 763 770
	Japan		
	Morocco		

VIII. Consideration of other areas dealing with the cessation of the arms race, arms limitation and disarmament and other relevant matters:

9. Non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (cont.)

Chronological		Alphabetical	
PV	Country/Speaker	Country/Speaker	PV
766	Russian Federation	Morocco	763
	Turkey		
		Nigeria	770
767	Senegal		
	Finland	Norway	761
770	Japan	Pakistan	753
	Poland		770
	Brazil		
	Egypt	Poland	756
	Chile		770
	India		
	Pakistan	Russian Federation	766
	Nigeria		
		Senegal	767
771	Ukraine		
		Slovakia	757
772	United States of America		
		Sri Lanka	753
774	Kazakhstan (non-member State)		
		Sweden	759
776	Hungary (Special Coordinator on the Review of the Agenda of the Conference)	Switzerland	761
	Germany	Turkey	766
777	Israel	Ukraine	771
778	Cyprus (non-member State)	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	751
		United States of America	751
			763
			772
		Non-member States	
		Cyprus	778
		Ireland	756
		Kazakhstan	774

VIII. Consideration of other areas dealing with the cessation of the arms race, arms limitation and disarmament and other relevant matters:

9. Non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (cont.)

Chronological		Alphabetical	
PV	Country/Speaker	Country/Speaker	PV
		Non-member States (cont.)	
		Malaysia	751
		Secretary-General of the United Nations	753
		Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament	758

VIII. Consideration of other areas dealing with the cessation of the arms race, arms limitation and disarmament and other relevant matters:

10. Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

Chronological		Alphabetical	
PV	Country/Speaker	Country/Speaker	PV
751	Italy	Algeria	753
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Australia	753
	Malaysia (non-member State)		
	Myanmar	Austria	760
	United States of America		
	Canada	Bangladesh	752
752	France	Brazil	755 770
	Germany		
	Egypt		
	Bangladesh	Canada	751 763
753	Secretary-General of the United Nations	Chile	753 770
	Australia		
	Pakistan		
	Algeria	China	770
	Japan		
	Chile	Cuba	770
	Sri Lanka		
	Iran (Islamic Republic of)	Egypt	752 754 763 770
754	Syrian Arab Republic		
	Egypt		
755	Brazil	France	752
756	Romania (President)	Germany	752 770 776
	New Zealand		
	Poland		
	Indonesia		
	Ireland (non-member State)	Hungary (Special Coordinator on the Review of the Agenda of the Conference)	776
758	Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament		
	Mexico	India	764 770 778
759	Sweden		
760	Austria	Indonesia	756 777

VIII. Consideration of other areas dealing with the cessation of the arms race, arms limitation and disarmament and other relevant matters:

10. Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (cont.)

Chronological		Alphabetical	
PV	Country/Speaker	Country/Speaker	PV
761	Russian Federation	Iran (Islamic Republic of)	753
	Norway		777
763	United States of America	Iraq	774
	Ukraine		776
	Egypt		
	Japan	Israel	777
	Morocco		
	Canada	Italy	751
			768
764	India		
	Poland	Japan	753
	Russian Federation		763
			770
766	Russian Federation		
	Turkey	Kenya	767
	South Africa		
		Mexico	758
767	Senegal		
	Kenya	Morocco	763
768	Slovakia	Myanmar	751
	Italy		
		Netherlands	773
769	United States of America		
		New Zealand	756
770	Japan		
	Brazil	Nigeria	770
	Chile		
	Germany	Norway	761
	Cuba		
	Egypt	Pakistan	753
	United States of America		
	China	Poland	756
	Spain		764
	India		
	Nigeria	Romania (President)	756
771	Ukraine	Russian Federation	761
			764
772	United States of America		766

VIII. Consideration of other areas dealing with the cessation of the arms race, arms limitation and disarmament and other relevant matters:

10. Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (cont.)

Chronological	
PV	Country/Speaker
773	Netherlands
774	Iraq
775	United States of America
	South Africa
776	Hungary (Special Coordinator on the Review of the Agenda of the Conference)
	Germany
	Iraq
777	Israel
	Indonesia
	Iran (Islamic Republic of)
778	India

Alphabetical	
Country/Speaker	PV
Senegal	767
Slovakia	768
South Africa	766
	775
Spain	770
Sri Lanka	753
Sweden	759
Syrian Arab Republic	754
Turkey	766
Ukraine	763
	771
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	751
United States of America	751
	763
	769
	770
	772
	775
Non-member States	
Ireland	756
Malaysia	751
Secretary-General of the United Nations	753
Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament	758

VIII. Consideration of other areas dealing with the cessation of the arms race, arms limitation and disarmament and other relevant matters:

11. Treaty on the Prohibition of the Emplacement of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction on the Sea-Bed and the Ocean Floor and in the Subsoil Thereof (Sea-Bed Treaty)

Chronological		Alphabetical	
PV	Country/Speaker	Country/Speaker	PV
	No entry	*No entry*	

VIII. Consideration of other areas dealing with the cessation of the arms race, arms limitation and disarmament and other relevant matters:

12. Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and under Water (Partial Test Ban Treaty)

Chronological		Alphabetical	
PV	Country/Speaker	Country/Speaker	PV
777	Israel	Israel	777

VIII. Consideration of other areas dealing with the cessation of the arms race, arms limitation and disarmament and other relevant matters:

13. Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (Biological Weapons Convention)

Chronological		Alphabetical	
PV	Country/Speaker	Country/Speaker	PV
751	Republic of Korea (President)	Australia	753
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Brazil	755
	Canada	Canada	751 763
752	Germany Egypt	Chile	753
753	Secretary-General of the United Nations	Egypt	752 763
	Australia		
	Pakistan		
	Chile	Germany	752
	Iran (Islamic Republic of)	Hungary	756
755	Brazil	India	764 770
756	New Zealand		
	Poland		
	Hungary	Iran (Islamic Republic of)	753
758	Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament	Japan	763 770
	Cyprus (non-member State)	New Zealand	756
759	Sweden	Norway	761
761	Russian Federation		
	Norway	Pakistan	753
763	Egypt	Poland	756
	Japan		
	Canada	Republic of Korea (President)	751
764	India	Russian Federation	761 766
766	Russian Federation		
	Turkey	Senegal	767

VIII. Consideration of other areas dealing with the cessation of the arms race, arms limitation and disarmament and other relevant matters:

13. Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (Biological Weapons Convention) (cont.)

Chronological		Alphabetical	
PV	Country/Speaker	Country/Speaker	PV
767	Senegal	Slovakia	768
768	Slovakia	Slovakia (President)	771
770	Japan India	Sweden	759
		Turkey	766
771	Slovakia (President)	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	751
772	United States of America	United States of America	772
		Non-member State	
		Cyprus	758
		Secretary-General of the United Nations	753
		Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament	758

VIII. Consideration of other areas dealing with the cessation of the arms race, arms limitation and disarmament and other relevant matters:

14. Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (Chemical Weapons Convention)

Chronological	
PV	Country/Speaker
751	Republic of Korea (President)
	Italy
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
	United States of America
	Canada
752	Germany
	Egypt
753	Secretary-General of the United Nations
	Australia
	Pakistan
	Japan
	Chile
	Iran (Islamic Republic of)
755	Brazil
756	Romania (President)
	New Zealand
	Poland
	Hungary
758	Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament
	Cyprus (non-member State)
759	Sweden
761	Russian Federation
	Norway
	Switzerland
	Iran (Islamic Republic of)
	United States of America
763	United States of America
	Ukraine
	Egypt

Alphabetical	
Country/Speaker	PV
Australia	753
Brazil	755
Canada	751 763
Chile	753
China	770
Egypt	752 763 770
Germany	752 764 770 776
Hungary	756
India	764 778
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	753 761
Iraq	774
Israel	777
Italy	751 768
Japan	753 763
Kenya	767

VIII. Consideration of other areas dealing with the cessation of the arms race, arms limitation and disarmament and other relevant matters:

14. Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (Chemical Weapons Convention) (cont.)

Chronological	
PV	Country/Speaker
763 cont.	Japan
	Canada
	Russian Federation
764	India
	Poland
	Germany
	Russian Federation
765	Senegal (President)
766	Russian Federation
	Turkey
767	Senegal
	Kenya
768	Slovakia
	Italy
769	Slovakia (President)
770	Poland
	China
	Germany
	Egypt
771	Slovakia (President)
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
	Ukraine
772	United States of America
773	Netherlands
774	Iraq
775	Sri Lanka (President)

Alphabetical	
Country/Speaker	PV
Netherlands	773
New Zealand	756
Norway	761
Pakistan	753
Poland	756
	764
	770
Republic of Korea (President)	751
Romania (President)	756
Russian Federation	761
	763
	764
	766
Senegal	767
Senegal (President)	765
Slovakia	768
Slovakia (President)	769
	771
Sri Lanka (President)	775
Sweden	759
Switzerland	761
Turkey	766

VIII. Consideration of other areas dealing with the cessation of the arms race, arms limitation and disarmament and other relevant matters:

14. Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (Chemical Weapons Convention)

(cont.)

Chronological		Alphabetical	
PV	Country/Speaker	Country/Speaker	PV
776	Germany	Ukraine	763 771
777	Israel	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	751 771
778	India	United States of America	751 761 763 772
		Non-member State	
		Cyprus	758
		Secretary-General of the United Nations	753
		Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament	758

VIII. Consideration of other areas dealing with the cessation of the arms race, arms limitation and disarmament and other relevant matters:

15. Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty

Chronological	
PV	Country/Speaker
751	Republic of Korea (President)
	Italy
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
	Malaysia (non-member State)
	Myanmar
	Finland
	United States of America
	Canada
752	France
	Germany
	Egypt
	Bangladesh
753	Secretary-General of the United Nations
	Australia
	Pakistan
	Algeria
	Japan
	Chile
	Sri Lanka
	Iran (Islamic Republic of)
754	Spain
755	Brazil
	Republic of Korea (President)
756	Romania (President)
	New Zealand
	Poland
	Hungary
	Ireland (non-member State)
757	Slovakia
758	Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament
	Cyprus (non-member State)

Alphabetical	
Country/Speaker	PV
Algeria	753
Australia	753
Austria	760
Bangladesh	752
Brazil	755
Canada	751 763
Chile	753 770
China	770
Egypt	752 770
Finland	751 777
France	752
Germany	752 764 770 776
Hungary	756
Hungary (Special Coordinator on the Review of the Agenda of the Conference)	776
India	764 770 778
Indonesia	777

VIII. Consideration of other areas dealing with the cessation of the arms race, arms limitation and disarmament and other relevant matters:

15. Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (cont.)

Chronological		Alphabetical	
PV	Country/Speaker	Country/Speaker	PV
759	Sweden	Iran (Islamic Republic of)	753
			761
760	Austria		
		Iraq	774
761	Russian Federation		
	Norway	Israel	777
	Italy		
	Iran (Islamic Republic of)	Italy	751
	United States of America		761
			768
763	United States of America		
	Ukraine	Japan	753
	Japan		763
	Morocco		770
	Canada		
		Kenya	767
764	India		
	Poland	Mexico	770
	Germany		
		Morocco	763
765	Senegal (President)		
		Myanmar	751
766	Russian Federation		
	Turkey	Netherlands	767
			773
767	Senegal		
	Kenya	New Zealand	756
	Netherlands		
		Nigeria	770
768	Slovakia		
	Italy	Norway	761
769	Slovakia (President)	Pakistan	753
	United States of America		
		Poland	756
770	Japan		764
	Poland		770
	China		
	Germany	Republic of Korea (President)	751
	Egypt		755
	Chile		

VIII. Consideration of other areas dealing with the cessation of the arms race, arms limitation and disarmament and other relevant matters:

15. Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (cont.)

Chronological	
PV	Country/Speaker
770 cont.	India Mexico Nigeria
771	Slovakia (President) United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland Ukraine
772	United States of America
773	Slovakia (President) Netherlands
774	Iraq
775	Sri Lanka (President)
776	Hungary (Special Coordinator on the Review of the Agenda of the Conference) Germany
777	Israel Indonesia Finland
778	Sri Lanka (President) India United States of America

Alphabetical	
Country/Speaker	PV
Romania (President)	756
Russian Federation	761 766
Senegal	767
Senegal (President)	765
Slovakia	757 768
Slovakia (President)	769 771 773
Spain	754
Sri Lanka	753
Sri Lanka (President)	775 778
Sweden	759
Turkey	766
Ukraine	763 771
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	751 771
United States of America	751 761 763 769 772 778

VIII. Consideration of other areas dealing with the cessation of the arms race, arms limitation and disarmament and other relevant matters:

15. Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (cont.)

Chronological		Alphabetical	
PV	Country/Speaker	Country/Speaker	PV
		Non-member States	
		Cyprus	758
		Ireland	756
		Malaysia	751
		Secretary-General of the United Nations	753
		Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament	758

VIII. Consideration of other areas dealing with the cessation of the arms race, arms limitation and disarmament and other relevant matters:

16. Missile technology

Chronological		Alphabetical	
PV	Country/Speaker	Country/Speaker	PV
753	Pakistan	Pakistan	753
766	Turkey	Turkey	766

VIII. Consideration of other areas dealing with the cessation of the arms race, arms limitation and disarmament and other relevant matters:

17. Conventional disarmament and reduction of armed forces

Chronological	
PV	Country/Speaker
751	Republic of Korea (President) Italy United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland Malaysia (non-member State) Myanmar Finland United States of America Canada
752	France Germany
753	Secretary-General of the United Nations Australia Pakistan Japan Sri Lanka Iran (Islamic Republic of)
754	Spain Pakistan
755	Brazil
756	New Zealand Poland Hungary
758	Cyprus (non-member State) Mexico
763	Japan Canada
766	Russian Federation
768	Italy Mexico
770	Poland

Alphabetical	
Country/Speaker	PV
Australia	753
Brazil	755
Canada	751 763
Finland	751
France	752
Germany	752
Hungary	756
Hungary (Special Coordinator on the Review of the Agenda of the Conference)	776
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	753
Italy	751 768
Japan	753 763
Mexico	758 768
Myanmar	751
New Zealand	756
Pakistan	753 754
Poland	756 770
Republic of Korea (President)	751

VIII. Consideration of other areas dealing with the cessation of the arms race, arms limitation and disarmament and other relevant matters:

17. Conventional disarmament and reduction of armed forces (cont.)

Chronological		Alphabetical	
PV	Country/Speaker	Country/Speaker	PV
775	Sri Lanka (President)	Russian Federation	766
776	Hungary (Special Coordinator on the Review of the Agenda of the Conference)	Spain	754
		Sri Lanka	753
778	Cyprus (non-member State)	Sri Lanka (President)	775
		United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	751
		United States of America	751
		Non-member States	
		Cyprus	758 778
		Malaysia	751
		Secretary-General of the United Nations	753

VIII. Consideration of other areas dealing with the cessation of the arms race, arms limitation and disarmament and other relevant matters:

18. Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (Certain Conventional Weapons Convention)

Chronological		Alphabetical	
PV	Country/Speaker	Country/Speaker	PV
751	Republic of Korea (President)	Austria	752
	Italy		760
752	France	Brazil	755
	Austria		
	Egypt	Canada	770
753	Secretary-General of the United Nations	Chile	753
	Pakistan	China	770
	Japan		776
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Cuba	770
	Chile		
	Sri Lanka	Egypt	752
	Iran (Islamic Republic of)		
		France	752
754	Spain		770
			776
755	Brazil		
		Iran (Islamic Republic of)	753
756	Romania (President)		
	New Zealand	Israel	777
	Poland		
	Switzerland	Italy	751
757	Slovakia	Japan	753
			763
758	Mexico		770
759	Sweden	Mexico	758
			767
760	Austria		768
761	Switzerland	New Zealand	756
			774
763	United States of America		
	Ukraine	Pakistan	753
	Japan		

VIII. Consideration of other areas dealing with the cessation of the arms race, arms limitation and disarmament and other relevant matters:

18. Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (Certain Conventional Weapons Convention)

(cont.)

Chronological	
PV	Country/Speaker
764	Poland
766	Russian Federation Turkey
767	Mexico
768	Slovakia Mexico
770	Japan China Cuba Canada France
774	New Zealand
775	United States of America
776	China France
777	Israel Ireland (non-member State)

Alphabetical	
Country/Speaker	PV
Poland	756 764
Republic of Korea (President)	751
Romania (President)	756
Russian Federation	766
Slovakia	757 768
Spain	754
Sri Lanka	753
Sweden	759
Switzerland	756 761
Turkey	766
Ukraine	763
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	753
United States of America	763 775
Non-member State	
Ireland	777
Secretary-General of the United Nations	753

VIII. Consideration of other areas dealing with the cessation of the arms race, arms limitation and disarmament and other relevant matters:

19. Regional disarmament

Chronological		Alphabetical	
PV	Country/Speaker	Country/Speaker	PV
751	Republic of Korea (President) Italy	Hungary (Special Coordinator on the Review of the Agenda of the Conference)	776
753	Pakistan Japan Iran (Islamic Republic of)	Iran (Islamic Republic of)	753
754	Pakistan Netherlands	Israel	777
776	Hungary (Special Coordinator on the Review of the Agenda of the Conference)	Italy	751
777	Israel	Japan	753
		Netherlands	754
		Pakistan	753 754
		Republic of Korea (President)	751

VIII. Consideration of other areas dealing with the cessation of the arms race, arms limitation and disarmament and other relevant matters:

20. Reduction of military budgets

Chronological		Alphabetical	
PV	Country/Speaker	Country/Speaker	PV
	No entry	*No entry*	

VIII. Consideration of other areas dealing with the cessation of the arms race, arms limitation and disarmament and other relevant matters:

21. Confidence-building measures

Chronological		Alphabetical	
PV	Country/Speaker	Country/Speaker	PV
751	Italy	China	770
752	Egypt	Egypt	752 763 770
753	Japan	Iraq	774
759	Sweden	Israel	777
761	Norway	Italy	751
763	Egypt Japan	Japan	753 763
766	Turkey	Norway	761
770	Egypt China	Sweden	759
771	Ukraine	Turkey	766
774	Iraq	Ukraine	771
777	Israel		

VIII. Consideration of other areas dealing with the cessation of the arms race, arms limitation and disarmament and other relevant matters:

22. Disarmament and international security

Chronological		Alphabetical	
PV	Country/Speaker	Country/Speaker	PV
751	Italy Republic of Korea (President)	Australia	753
752	Egypt	Chile	753
753	Secretary-General of the United Nations Australia Pakistan Chile Sri Lanka	China	770
754	Syrian Arab Republic	Egypt	752
756	Hungary	Germany	764 770
761	Norway	Hungary	756
763	United States of America Japan Morocco	India	770 778
764	Germany	Iraq	774
765	Sudan (non-member State)	Israel	777
766	Turkey	Italy	751
767	Senegal	Japan	763
768	Mexico	Mexico	768 777
770	China Germany India Pakistan Nigeria	Morocco	763
771	Ukraine	Netherlands	773
773	Netherlands	Nigeria	770
		Norway	761
		Pakistan	753 770
		Republic of Korea (President)	751
		Senegal	767

VIII. Consideration of other areas dealing with the cessation of the arms race, arms limitation and disarmament and other relevant matters:

22. Disarmament and international security (cont.)

Chronological		Alphabetical	
PV	Country/Speaker	Country/Speaker	PV
774	Iraq Kazakhstan (non-member State)	Sri Lanka	753
		Syrian Arab Republic	754
777	Israel Mexico	Turkey	766
778	India	Ukraine	771
		United States of America	763
		Non-member States	
		Kazakhstan	774
		Sudan	765
		Secretary-General of the United Nations	753

VIII. Consideration of other areas dealing with the cessation of the arms race, arms limitation and disarmament and other relevant matters:

23. Scientific and technological development

Chronological		Alphabetical	
PV	Country/Speaker	Country/Speaker	PV
	No entry	*No entry*	

VIII. Consideration of other areas dealing with the cessation of the arms race, arms limitation and disarmament and other relevant matters:

24. Unilateral disarmament measures

Chronological		Alphabetical	
PV	Country/Speaker	Country/Speaker	PV
751	Italy	Australia	753
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Austria	752
	United States of America		
		China	770
752	France		
	Austria	France	752
	Germany		770
			776
753	Secretary-General of the United Nations	Germany	752
	Australia		776
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Hungary	756
754	Spain	Israel	777
756	New Zealand	Italy	751
	Poland		768
	Hungary		
	Ireland (non-member State)	New Zealand	756
	Switzerland		
		Norway	761
757	Slovakia		
		Poland	756
758	Cyprus (non-member State)		764
759	Sweden	Romania	776
761	Norway	Russian Federation	766
763	Ukraine	Senegal	767
764	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Slovakia	757 768
	Poland		
		Spain	754
766	Russian Federation		
	Turkey	Sweden	759
767	Senegal	Switzerland	756

VIII. Consideration of other areas dealing with the cessation of the arms race, arms limitation and disarmament and other relevant matters:

24. Unilateral disarmament measures

(cont.)

Chronological		Alphabetical	
PV	Country/Speaker	Country/Speaker	PV
768	Slovakia Italy	Turkey	766
770	China France	Ukraine	763 771
771	Ukraine	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	751 753 764
774	Kazakhstan (non-member State)	United States of America	751
776	Germany Romania France	Non-member States	
777	Israel	Cyprus	758 778
778	Cyprus (non-member State)	Ireland	756
		Kazakhstan	774
		Secretary-General of the United Nations	753

VIII. Consideration of other areas dealing with the cessation of the arms race, arms limitation and disarmament and other relevant matters:

25. General and complete disarmament

Chronological		Alphabetical	
PV	Country/Speaker	Country/Speaker	PV
751	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Austria	760
		Bangladesh	752
752	France Egypt Bangladesh	Brazil	755 770
753	Japan	Chile	770
754	Spain	Egypt	752 763
755	Brazil		
		France	752
756	New Zealand		
		Japan	753
758	Mexico (on behalf of the Group of 21) Cyprus (non-member State)	Mexico (on behalf of the Group of 21)	758
760	Austria	New Zealand	756
763	Egypt	Senegal	767
766	Turkey	Spain	754
767	Senegal	Turkey	766
769	United States of America	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	751
770	Brazil Chile	United States of America	769
778	Cyprus (non-member State)		
		Non-member State	
		Cyprus	758 778

VIII. Consideration of other areas dealing with the cessation of the arms race, arms limitation and disarmament and other relevant matters:

26. Arms and the environment

Chronological		Alphabetical	
PV	Country/Speaker	Country/Speaker	PV
761	Norway	Egypt	763
763	Egypt	Norway	761
774	Kazakhstan (non-member State)		
		Non-member State	
		Kazakhstan	774

VIII. Consideration of other areas dealing with the cessation of the arms race, arms limitation and disarmament and other relevant matters:

27. Disarmament and development

Chronological		Alphabetical	
PV	Country/Speaker	Country/Speaker	PV
758	Cyprus (non-member State)	Cyprus (non-member State)	758

VIII. Consideration of other areas dealing with the cessation of the arms race, arms limitation and disarmament and other relevant matters:

28. Role of non-governmental organizations

Chronological		Alphabetical	
PV	Country/Speaker	Country/Speaker	PV
758	Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament	Brazil	776
	New Zealand (on behalf of the Western Group)	China	758
	Mexico (on behalf of the Group of 21)	Egypt (Special Coordinator on the Improved and Effective Functioning of the Conference)	776
	Hungary (on behalf of the Eastern European Group)		
	China	Hungary (on behalf of the Eastern European Group)	758
	Cyprus (non-member State)		
774	New Zealand	Mexico (on behalf of the Group of 21)	758
776	Egypt (Special Coordinator on the Improved and Effective Functioning of the Conference)	New Zealand	774
	Brazil	New Zealand (on behalf of the Western Group)	758
		Non-member State	
		Cyprus	758
		Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament	758

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.751
21 January 1997

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE SEVEN HUNDRED AND FIFTY-FIRST PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva
on Tuesday, 21 January 1997, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Sun (Republic of Korea)

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 751st plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament and the first part of the 1997 session.

At the outset, I should like to extend on behalf of the Conference, and on my own behalf, a warm welcome to our distinguished visitor today, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Italy, His Excellency Mr. Lamberto Dini, who will be our first speaker. His presence among us today is yet another testimony of the continued interest of his Government in the multilateral approach to arms control and disarmament and the importance it attaches to our Conference. I am sure that his statement will be followed with great interest.

Allow me also to extend a cordial welcome to the new colleagues who have taken up their duties as representatives of their countries to the Conference since the end of the 1996 session - Ambassadors Dembri of Algeria, Campbell of Australia, Chowdhury of Bangladesh, Mernier of Belgium and Corrales Leal of Venezuela - and assure them of our cooperation and support in their new assignments.

I would now like to make an opening statement.

It is a great honour for me to assume, on behalf of the Republic of Korea, the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. I would like to stress that no efforts will be spared on my part in carrying out my duties as President.

First of all, I wish to express my deep gratitude to my predecessor, Ambassador Ludwik Dembinski of Poland, for the valuable efforts and contribution he made during his presidency. I am also grateful to Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, Secretary-General of the CD and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, and Mr. Abdelkader Bensmail, Deputy Secretary-General, and all other staff members of the secretariat for their able and indispensable support.

As we begin a new year, it is appropriate to look back and take stock of the developments in the disarmament area for the year which has just been brought to a close. In 1996, there were, indeed, a variety of events to list as meaningful developments in the disarmament domain, both within and outside the CD framework. For example: the fulfilment of conditions for the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention, with Hungary becoming the 65th country to deposit the instruments of its ratification; the amendment of Protocol II on landmines of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons; the convening of the International Strategy Conference on the global ban on anti-personnel landmines, commonly referred to as the "Ottawa Process"; the signing of the African Nuclear-weapon-free-zone Treaty (the Treaty of Pelindaba); the progress towards establishing a verification regime for the Biological Weapons Convention; and, most importantly, the signing of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

There is no question that the adoption of the CTBT by the United Nations General Assembly in September last year was a landmark achievement for the cause of the ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons. It is a giant step forward in the march towards the goal of creating a world free of nuclear weapons, which is the common aspiration of humankind. However, we should not let ourselves fall into euphoria, because there are still important steps to be taken and hurdles to be overcome before we see the Treaty enter into force and actually be implemented.

These questions I have just mentioned bear on an important issue facing us today, the setting of the CD's agenda for 1997, to which I now turn.

The rules of procedure of the CD provide that the Conference adopts its agenda and establishes its programme of work, on the basis of its agenda, at the beginning of each annual session. Unfortunately, I must report that the Conference has yet to reach a consensus on the agenda and work programme. In the light of the consultations I have conducted with the different groups and delegations, I have prepared a draft provisional agenda for the 1997 session with the hope that such an agenda can be adopted without prejudice to the outcome of the CD's consultations on the organizational arrangements to address the various agenda items.

At the same time, we have drawn an important lesson from the whole process of the negotiations leading up to the final adoption of the Treaty by the United Nations General Assembly, in terms of the future role or functioning of the CD as the single multilateral negotiating forum for disarmament. It is no secret that, even though the CD made a crucial contribution to the birth of the CTBT by crafting the Treaty through long and painstaking negotiations, the text of the Treaty could not be formally forwarded by the CD to the United Nations General Assembly, hence leaving to that body the task of bringing the Treaty into being. Thus, the whole CTBT process has brought the CD to a crossroads in terms of redefining its future role and enhancing its credibility vis-à-vis the international community, while at the same time setting a new direction for the CD to move in the years to come.

How should the CD consolidate its relevance and viability as a multilateral negotiating forum? How can we achieve a synergy between the CD process and other parallel processes for disarmament, with a view to reinforcing the role of the CD, while not letting the two processes compete with each other to the detriment of the CD's integrity?

Of course, I am not attempting to pass any premature value judgements on these important issues. I am simply raising, at this critical juncture, those important questions which should be answered collectively by all the CD members on an urgent basis.

The draft provisional agenda, having been prepared taking into consideration the evolution of the work of the CD in recent years, and recommendations contained in the pertinent resolutions adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, encompasses such items as: nuclear disarmament; the prohibition of the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices; effective international

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arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons; transparency in armaments; prevention of an arms race in outer space; anti-personnel landmines; and regional aspects of conventional disarmament.

I intend to carry on my consultations with the members of the CD in order to reach a consensus on the agenda, without losing sight of the importance of setting up the concrete work mechanisms on the individual agenda items. But most of all, I shall rely on the support and cooperation of all delegations of the CD in performing my duty on this particular issue.

I wish to take this opportunity to pay my tribute to Ambassador Hocine Meghlaoui of Algeria, the former Special Coordinator on the review of the agenda, and Ambassador Ludwik Dembinski of Poland, the past President of the CD, for their valuable and unsparing efforts in this regard.

Consultations have also been conducted on the expansion of membership since the presidency of Ambassador Dembinski, and a consensus has emerged on the appointment of a Special Coordinator with a broad mandate. As of now, 17 States have applied for membership in the CD. I will propose soon to the plenary the adoption of an appropriate decision on this issue.

While renewing my pledge to do my utmost in carrying out my duties as the President of the CD, I appeal once again to all of you to demonstrate a spirit of cooperation and compromise so that the work of the CD proves to be productive in the weeks to come.

Besides the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Italy, I have on my list of speakers for today the representatives of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Malaysia, Myanmar, Finland, Poland, the United States of America and Canada. Once we have heard the speakers inscribed for today, I shall invite the Conference to consider, in an informal plenary meeting, the requests received from States not members of the Conference to participate in our work during this session. These requests have been circulated to you under the document symbol CD/WP.479. Thereafter, we shall resume the plenary meeting in order to formalize the agreement reached in the informal meeting.

I have pleasure in inviting the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Italy, His Excellency Lamberto Dini, to make his statement.

Mr. DINI (Italy): I begin by congratulating you on your appointment to chair this Conference and by recalling the most friendly and fruitful relations Italy enjoys with your own country. I should also like to voice our most sincere appreciation for the skilful stewardship of Ambassador Jaap Ramaker as Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban, who presided over the negotiations that led to the conclusion of the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty last September.

(Mr. Dini, Italy)

I also wish to thank the Secretary-General of the Conference, Ambassador Vladimir Petrovsky and his deputy, Mr. Bensmail, who made an outstanding contribution to the successful outcome of the CTBT negotiations, and now guarantee the smooth running of our Conference.

My presence at this inaugural session is meant to underline the importance that the Italian Government attaches to disarmament, which is a central component of our security policy, and I consider it a distinct privilege to address you today at this inaugural session of the CD.

Membership of this Conference forms part of a much broader context in which Italy views the United Nations and its principal agencies to be the most appropriate forums for dealing comprehensively with the disarmament issue.

This Conference must continue to be the main multilateral disarmament negotiating body, with the primary purpose of concluding agreements to be adopted by the international community as a whole. Its authority will be enhanced as more countries acquire full membership, including those member States of the European Union that have already submitted their applications.

Italy believes that other international forums can effectively support the important role played by the United Nations system. More prominence, we believe, should be assigned to the G7 group of the most highly industrialized countries, with whose political deliberations the Russian Federation is associated, and which in recent years has advanced major proposals, particularly in the areas of disarmament and nuclear safety. Last April's Moscow summit was one of the most significant events in this regard. The launching of a new policy that I would call "disarmament cooperation", namely, the provision of assistance to countries that are called on to make the greatest efforts in the sphere of arms reduction, is certainly one of the areas in which the G7/P8 group can best express its full potential.

But arms control and reduction is also a regional issue, and some of the disarmament and non-proliferation problems can be more effectively resolved within their own geopolitical context. We cannot, for example, tackle the nuclear problem in South Asia or the Middle East without taking account of the deep-seated causes which are preventing certain countries, even today, from adhering to the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Over the past 50 years Europe has lived in a state of tension and confrontation, and has done more than any other continent to put into place the most advanced disarmament, security and confidence-building measures.

The recently reinforced Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) provides a security framework within which all the European States participate on an equal footing and which has provided the setting for a number of important agreements: I am thinking in particular of the Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty, on which renegotiations will begin in a few days' time, and of the subregional disarmament undertakings and understandings established last June by the Florence Agreement aiming at a military balance in the former Yugoslavia, an area which should be gradually integrated into the rest of Europe also in terms of security.

The European Union's foreign and security policy has, in the past few years, given special attention to disarmament and non-proliferation. We hope that, in the future, the European Union will play a part in its own right at the Conference on Disarmament. Italy is supporting the development of a European defence and security identity within the European security structures - and I am referring to the European Union and the Western European Union - and in the Atlantic Alliance. At the same time we support the development of NATO's new tasks, in peace-keeping and cooperation, and in the overall security risks posed by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

I felt it appropriate to provide these indications of Italy's stance on disarmament before coming to the specific issues addressed by this Conference. I would like first of all to pay tribute to the outstanding results the Conference has achieved in recent years. The Convention banning chemical weapons was concluded thanks to your commitment, and is now about to come into force. This is mainly a disarmament agreement which must be applied flexibly and consistently, bearing in mind that not every State has yet signed or ratified it.

The latest success of the Conference on Disarmament is the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty, concluded last year after intensive negotiations. If nuclear explosions are becoming a thing of the past, we owe this fact to those countries that negotiated the Treaty in Geneva. We must do our utmost to encourage the States which have not yet signed the Treaty to accede to it as soon as possible, in a climate of greater international and regional trust.

Italy is determined to pursue nuclear disarmament globally, with the ultimate goal of eliminating all nuclear weapons. We took on specific responsibilities in the negotiations leading to the banning and destruction of intermediate-range nuclear forces, and we are equally committed today. No one can deny that important results have been achieved in recent years. The dramatic reductions already made, particularly in Western Europe, speak for themselves. We thus believe that the path of nuclear disarmament is now clearly defined. We hope to exploit the momentum that was created by the START I and START II Treaties and work for further verifiable arms limitation and reductions which could eventually involve the other nuclear Powers.

We do understand the impatience shown by certain States regarding nuclear disarmament, but we believe that the problem cannot be solved by merely issuing fine-sounding declarations. This is why we urge everyone to be specific and to embark on negotiations for which we feel, along with others, that the time is now ripe. I am referring to a convention banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices - the so-called "cut-off" - and to the resumption of the negotiations in the 1995 Ad Hoc Committee, whose activity is still paralysed. It is inconceivable to permit fissile materials to be manufactured while nuclear tests are being banned and existing fissile material is being destroyed. It would be a historical contradiction. But the "cut-off" is only the first in a series of measures set out in the "Principles and objectives" document agreed at the Review and Extension Conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty

(Mr. Dini, Italy)

(NPT). In the view of the Italian Government, this document is itself a plan of action for nuclear disarmament over the next few years. Some of the most promising goals that still lie ahead are the following: consolidating and extending the denuclearized zones, especially in areas of tension; strengthening negative and positive security assurances to benefit States that fully comply with the provisions of the Non-Proliferation Treaty; and extending and enhancing the IAEA safeguards in order to detect and prevent more effectively any possible undeclared nuclear activity.

The need for this Conference to deal also with conventional armaments is not only to strike a proper balance between nuclear and conventional arms issues. It is generally acknowledged that the excessive build-up of conventional weapons is destabilizing and can fuel regional conflicts. The control of conventional weapons therefore demands particular attention. In Europe, the CFE Treaty and the Florence Agreement on the control of weapons in the former Yugoslavia are already a reality, and bear witness to our commitment. We are ready to make available to everyone the experience that we have acquired in this sector. Disarmament is a question of experience and know-how, which we shall all be more than willing to share.

Priority must be given to emergency situations, and the main emergency the international community is required to deal with today is the question of anti-personnal landmines. We must focus on this issue for moral and humanitarian reasons, and also in the interest of economic development. As President Clinton recently said, "Our children deserve to walk the Earth in safety".

The President of the Italian Republic, and other major international authorities, including Pope John Paul II, have launched appeals for an agreement banning these weapons. At home, the Italian Parliament is now debating a bill banning anti-personnel landmines which should be one of the most advanced pieces of legislation ever adopted. In particular, it will contain the commitment I entered into last September in New York to ensure that Italy would ban the export and manufacture of anti-personnel landmines once and for all, and begin reducing them by destroying existing stocks of landmines and introducing further restrictions.

Italy considers that the whole complex issue of anti-personnel landmines, imposing a total ban on their production, destroying existing stockpiles, and verifying their destruction is essentially a disarmament problem. This is why, when I addressed the United Nations General Assembly, I said that these important negotiations should be left to the Conference on Disarmament. I welcome in this respect the very recent announcement by the United States which recognizes the CD as the most appropriate forum for these negotiations. This Conference has the experience, the facilities and the personnel to handle these negotiations. We fully realize the difficulties that lie ahead, owing to the long time it usually takes to agree on a mandate. We nevertheless believe that the issue of anti-personnel landmines is a challenge to us to tackle promptly what has now become an emergency situation. We also know that various political initiatives are being taken, whose aims we wholly endorse, and which are also designed to rapidly define an international agreement. But we maintain that for such an agreement to be credible it must attract the largest possible number of countries, and avoid setting up a narrowly based regime that excludes the most important countries.

To deal with the issue of anti-personnel landmines, the European Union has been implementing its most advanced foreign and security policy instrument. I am referring to the Joint Action approved by the EU Council on 1 October 1996. This forms the central benchmark for Italy's policy in this field. As the first immediate step to be taken, we urge every country to ratify and wholly implement, even before its entry into force, the 1980 Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, and in particular Protocol II as amended in May last year (1996). Even though this Convention is not itself sufficient, it will immediately make it possible to reduce the number of victims of such weapons.

As the first and immediate measure to block the flow of anti-personnel landmines, we propose setting up a special international register recording all exports of anti-personnel landmines. But the main purpose is to work towards an international agreement imposing a total ban on the transfer, production, use and storage of anti-personnel landmines. We believe that we should immediately explore the possibility of commencing negotiations here at this Conference, bearing in mind the need to ensure that whatever measures are adopted here are both feasible and effective.

Looking ahead to the debate on the 1997 agenda of the Conference on Disarmament, which this first plenary session is inaugurating, I would like to express the hope that realism will eventually prevail, as should be the case when there is a clear political will to effectively resolve fundamental problems.

I can assure you that my Government will continue to give the closest possible attention to this forum, acknowledging its paramount function of safeguarding international peace and security.

The international disarmament agenda for the coming years is already quite full, and the Conference on Disarmament will have to be its main negotiating forum. It can allow itself no respite and no sabbatical year, because public opinion at home and our national parliaments would never understand, and would never accept it.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Italy for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair.

Before giving the floor to the next speakers, I should like to invite the Secretary-General of the Conference and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to inform us on the resources allocated to the Conference for its current session.

Mr. PETROVSKY (Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations): I should like to inform you that the Secretary-General of the United Nations,

(Mr. Petrovsky, Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations)

Mr. Kofi Annan, has decided to take the opportunity of his presence in Geneva on Thursday, 30 January, to address the Conference. On that occasion, he will share with us his vision of the international disarmament agenda and the importance he attaches to our forum. Thus, I will limit my remarks today to providing information on the resources allocated to the Conference this year.

As you know, the secretariat is mandated by the United Nations General Assembly to report to the Conference on the services available to it during its annual sessions. During its 1997 session, the Conference will be allocated 10 meetings per week with full services. In other words, we should be able to hold two daily meetings with full services throughout the whole of the session.

As you are all aware, the United Nations continues to face a serious financial crisis and, under the current circumstances, it is essential that the Conference makes the best possible use of the resources allocated to it. The Conference has, in the past, shown great flexibility in using the time allocated to it and I am sure that this will also be the case this year. I should like to remind you that punctuality in starting meetings is very important and that, as usual, meetings with full services cannot be held in the evenings or during weekends.

The situation with regard to documentation in the United Nations continues to be a source of serious concern, and the capacity of the conference services to process documents in a timely manner is being constantly eroded. In this connection, I wish to recall, again, that the measures accepted by the Conference at its informal meeting held on 22 April 1986 concerning savings in documentation continue to be valid. In order to implement these decisions, all documents need to be presented well in advance and duplication of documentation should be avoided. I am sure I can count on your cooperation in exercising every restraint, whenever possible, in the control of documentation.

I would also like to recall that, as part of the secretariat's efforts to reduce expenditure, the following changes were made in the provision of services to the meeting rooms as of 4 March 1996: only documents containing draft proposals which require action will be circulated in the meeting room; while pre-session and reference documents will continue to be supplied to the permanent and observer missions. Therefore, delegations are kindly requested to keep the received copies throughout the annual session and use them during meetings. Nevertheless, a limited number of documents will be available from the documents distribution counter in room C-111.

I would also like to remind delegations to submit as soon as possible their letters of accreditation so that we may issue passes granting access to the Conference rooms, as well as the list of participants. Delegations are kindly requested to carry with them either their CD passes or at least the identification provided by the United Nations Office at Geneva.

The Conference will continue to have at its disposal the Council Chamber, room I, room C-108, and the secretariat conference room on the sixth floor. When delegations need such facilities for their consultations, I would ask that they coordinate their requests through the secretariat.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Mr. Petrovsky for his statement and information. The Secretary-General of the United Nations has sent me a communication transmitting all the resolutions on disarmament and international security matters adopted by the General Assembvly at its fifty-first session. This communication has been distributed by the secretariat as document CD/1440.

I give the floor to the representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Ambassador Sir Michael Weston.

Sir Michael WESTON (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland): I take this opportunity to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference. My intention in my statement this morning is to set out the United Kingdom's approach to nuclear disarmament. Before doing so, however, I wish to welcome the recent announcement by the United States that they will seek to initiate negotiations here at the CD for a total worldwide ban on anti-personnel landmines. The United States' proposal is closely in line with United Kingdom policy and we fully support it. We agree with the United States that this Conference, with its wide membership and established standing, has clear advantages as an international forum for achieving agreement on a worldwide ban. To be effective, an international agreement must include the countries of real concern, the major producers and exporters and those countries which use landmines indiscriminately. I note that this is very much the view just expressed by the distinguished Foreign Minister of Italy, whose statement I warmly welcome. Now I turn to my subject, nuclear disarmament.

The United Kingdom is sometimes accused of not being in favour of nuclear disarmament - or even of being opposed to it. This is simply not true. My purpose this morning, right at the outset of this new CD session, is to explain why and to put forward what I believe to be a practical and realistic approach to nuclear disarmament. From this remark, you will gather that I believe that the alternative approach, put forward so often by others, is neither practical nor realistic, however fine it may sound. Fine words, as they say, butter no parsnips.

The starting-point for the United Kingdom's approach to nuclear disarmament is, of course, article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the NPT. Under that article, to quote it exactly: "Each of the Parties to the Treaty undertakes to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament, and on a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control".

The United Kingdom is fully committed to this article of the NPT, as to other articles of the Treaty. Clearly the nuclear arms race between East and West has now ceased. But, of course, both nuclear disarmament and general and complete disarmament remain to be fully achieved. And there is scope for debate about how best to pursue these objectives. Fortunately the 1995 Conference of NPT States parties has helped to identify the way forward by adopting the "Principles and objectives for non-proliferation and disarmament", in which the section on "Nuclear disarmament" sets out the importance to the international community of three specific objectives: the completion of negotiations for a comprehensive test-ban treaty no later than 1996; the immediate commencement and early conclusion of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty; and "systematic and progressive efforts to reduce nuclear weapons globally". The United Kingdom continues to believe that this represents a very sensible agenda for the foreseeable future and I should like to say a few more words about each of these items.

First, the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty, the CTBT. Well, we have, of course, completed the negotiations for a CTBT. Formally, therefore, this objective set out in the "Principles and objectives" has been achieved. But there is still some way to go before the international monitoring system foreseen by the Treaty is established and before the Treaty enters into force. The United Kingdom believes that we must continue to give high priority to these objectives if the promise of the CTBT is to be fully realized.

The international community has made a good start. One hundred and thirty-eight States have now signed the Treaty, including all five of the nuclear-weapon States. There has been a first meeting of the Preparatory Commission for the Organization that will develop and oversee the international monitoring system. This meeting will be resumed shortly here in Geneva. Pressing on with the tasks that fall to this Commission is a high priority for the United Kingdom.

At the same time, we must continue to hope that those States which have said they will not sign the Treaty will have a change of heart. Just as the CTBT will reinforce the end of the old nuclear arms race between East and West, so it can help to prevent the outbreak of any new nuclear arms race elsewhere. And that must be in everybody's interest - in particular of those that would be most directly affected. So the United Kingdom does not despair of the entry-into-force conditions being met. We sincerely hope they will be met sooner rather than later, and we shall work hard to persuade the countries concerned that their interests lie in signing the CTBT as soon as possible.

The second element in the "Nuclear disarmament" section of the "Principles and objectives" is the fissile material cut-off treaty, the FMCT. This treaty is in effect a complementary measure to the CTBT. Like the CTBT, it will not lead directly to any reductions in nuclear forces. But, also like the CTBT, it will put a limit on the extent to which they can be developed. And it is certainly impossible to envisage the achievement of nuclear disarmament without an FMCT. Let me expand on these two points.

How will the FMCT circumscribe the way in which nuclear forces can be developed? Quite simply by constraining the amount of unsafeguarded fissile material available for potential use in nuclear explosives. I have heard it said that, in practice, the FMCT is unnecessary because the nuclear-weapon

States have already said they have ceased the production of fissile material for use in nuclear explosives. Well, the United States, Russia, the United Kingdom and France have indeed made such statements. But a universal and verifiable FMCT would still have a number of very important effects. It would formalize and verify these statements. It would bring in the other nuclear-weapon State, China. And it would put constraints on the ability of certain non-parties to the NPT to produce more unsafeguarded fissile material. These would be important accomplishments.

But the FMCT would do much more than this. It would also provide an essential foundation for the eventual achievement of nuclear disarmament. Clearly there can be no final achievement of this goal without verification arrangements on all the key facilities which can produce fissile material suitable for use in nuclear explosives. I refer to enrichment and reprocessing facilities. And whatever else an FMCT may or may not do, it will certainly have to involve applying verification arrangements to all such facilities. So, as I have said, the FMCT will put in place an essential prerequisite for the achievement of nuclear disarmament.

I hear it said by some of my colleagues here in the CD that there can be no negotiation of an FMCT without a simultaneous negotiation about a timetable for nuclear disarmament. But the experience of the recent past shows very clearly that linkage between negotiations is not the way to make progress. The INF Treaty, the START I Treaty, the START II Treaty, and the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty - none of these was achieved by linking progress on them to progress on other issues. Nor indeed were other important treaties, such as the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe Treaty and the Chemical Weapons Convention. So let us now get on with the negotiation of an FMCT in the CD without getting distracted by questions of linkage.

This brings me to the third item in the "Nuclear disarmament" section of the "Principles and objectives" - "the determined pursuit by the nuclear-weapon States of systematic and progressive efforts to reduce nuclear weapons globally, with the ultimate goals [sic] of eliminating those weapons, and by all States of general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control".

There are those who feel that, in pursuit of this objective, the international community now needs to agree on a timetable for nuclear disarmament - to map out all the steps for getting from here to there. Some CD members believe this so strongly that they are refusing to allow an ad hoc committee to negotiate an FMCT unless there is also an ad hoc committee to negotiate such a timetable for nuclear disarmament. I have to say quite bluntly that the United Kingdom does not believe this is the best way of making progress towards the goal we all share, either substantively or procedurally.

Substantively, we simply do not see the value at this stage in trying now to devise a complete blueprint for the final achievement of nuclear disarmament. In the United Kingdom's view, the next steps are clear enough - the ratification of START II by Russia, the implementation of START II, the negotiation of a bilateral START III between the two States who still possess the vast majority of nuclear weapons in the world. These are large steps in their own right. And taking them will require time. Given the huge uncertainties that looking even further into the future would involve, is it really sensible to expend a lot of effort doing that now? I do not deny that this would be an interesting intellectual exercise. But is it an exercise to which diplomats can usefully contribute at this stage? Frankly, we do not think so.

And this brings me to my procedural point. In our view, the CD should continue to do what it has always done best - namely to negotiate detailed treaties on specific subjects. By adopting this approach, the CD and its predecessors have notched up an impressive list of achievements over the years - the NPT, the BTWC, the CWC, and most recently the CTBT. The CD should not now depart from this winning formula. Instead of wasting its talents on star-gazing, it should turn its energies to the specific job of negotiating an FMCT, a task which its excellent track record suggests it could fulfil admirably. And which, as I have noted earlier, would lay one of the essential foundations for nuclear disarmament.

Let me make one thing clear. The United Kingdom is not opposed to nuclear disarmament. Indeed, as I shall spell out in a moment, we have made our own contribution to the process. But - for the substantive and procedural reasons I have already mentioned - we are opposed to an ad hoc committee in the CD on nuclear disarmament. We believe that, in current circumstances, it is the bilateral START forum which offers the best hope of further progress on negotiated reductions in nuclear forces. Let us not forget what START I has already achieved, what START II offers, and what START III promises. If we are looking for "systematic and progressive efforts to reduce nuclear weapons globally", we need look no further than the START process for the immediate future.

Please do not think that I am putting forward this argument because the START process does not involve the United Kingdom. The United Kingdom's record in reducing its nuclear forces is second to none. Over the past few years we have been gradually reducing their number and we are continuing to do so. By the end of 1998, the United Kingdom will have only one nuclear system - and a total number of operational nuclear weapons that will be less than 10 per cent of the number of strategic nuclear weapons which the United States and Russia will each be permitted, even when START II is fully implemented. And we have already made it clear that "a world in which American and Russian nuclear forces were no longer counted in thousands but in hundreds would be one where we were ready to join in multilateral negotiations on the global reduction of nuclear arms".

The United Kingdom is therefore already making a full contribution to the process of nuclear reductions and has made clear its readiness to engage in multilateral discussions about further contributions to this process in due course. But we believe that the next steps in this process are best taken through the bilateral START process. We do not believe that a discussion in the CD about a timetable for the final achievement of nuclear disarmament would be a productive use of the CD's time - or make best use of the CD's proven talents in negotiating specific treaties on discrete topics. The CD would make a much more useful contribution to the achievement of nuclear disarmament if it focused on negotiating an FMCT - and thus on getting verification arrangements in place on all reprocessing and enrichment facilities.

Before I close, I should like to make one further point about progress towards nuclear disarmament. It is often said that it will be impossible to maintain the non-proliferation regime unless there is still more rapid progress towards nuclear disarmament. Whether that is true or not, the opposite is certainly true. It will be impossible to maintain progress towards nuclear disarmament unless the non-proliferation regime is maintained.

In the United Kingdom's view, it therefore remains a high priority to work for universal adherence to the NPT and to strengthen the associated system of safeguards. We are pleased that the Part 1 measures resulting from the "93+2" programme are now being implemented. But we must press forward with efforts to complete the model of the protocol that will give the International Atomic Energy Agency, IAEA, the legal authority to implement the Part 2 measures - and then ensure that all relevant States actually conclude with IAEA protocols based on that model. This is fundamental if the Agency is to have the powers it needs to prevent any repetition of the Iraqi experience. It is also essential that the international community continues to provide the United Nations Special Commission and IAEA with the resources and support they need to continue their work in Iraq. And, as an early contributor to the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization, the United Kingdom is keenly aware of the need to keep the Agreed Framework arrangements on track.

We are also keen to take forward the work which was initiated at the Moscow summit on nuclear safety, concerning options for the disposal of surplus fissile material resulting from the dismantling of nuclear weapons. Most of these options are long-term in nature, so it is also essential that interim storage arrangements are safe and secure - and placed as soon as practicable under IAEA safeguards. Further work on the disposal of surplus fissile material resulting from dismantled nuclear weapons is also important. We welcome the various cooperative projects with Russia that are now going forward in this area. Nor should any of us forget the welcome decisions taken by the Governments of Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakstan, which mean that there are no longer any nuclear weapons on their territories. All these developments are important pieces in the non-proliferation jigsaw, and hence in the nuclear disarmament jigsaw.

But, of course, the NPT itself remains the cornerstone of the international community's non-proliferation efforts. The United Kingdom looks forward to the beginning in April 1997 of the strengthened review process to which all the parties agreed at the 1995 Conference. We look forward to a wide-ranging and productive discussion.

Although I have spoken mainly about nuclear issues, we should not forget that article VI of the NPT speaks of general and complete disarmament as well as of nuclear disarmament. And, just as non-proliferation efforts are essential to the achievement of nuclear disarmament, so are other arms control efforts which contribute to this broader goal of general and complete disarmament.

If we are serious about nuclear disarmament - and, as I have demonstrated, the United Kingdom is - we must also press on with these other efforts, particularly those relating to other weapons of mass destruction. The Chemical Weapons Convention is now set to enter into force in April 1997. But key States - indeed, all States - must adhere to it if it is to make the contribution to national and international security which we firmly believe it can. And, following the recent BWC Review Conference, efforts must continue to complete the Ad Hoc Group's work to strengthen the Convention through drawing up a legally binding verification and compliance regime.

I have one final point to make. In the discussions about nuclear disarmament which have followed the indefinite extension of the NPT, there is, I fear, a good deal of Utopianism. Of course there is nothing wrong with Utopianism. A famous British playwright, Oscar Wilde, once said that "a map of the world that does not include Utopia is not even worth glancing at". He was right. We need to have high aspirations.

But we also need realism about the best way of achieving those aspirations. I sometimes feel that in the current debate about nuclear disarmament the more distant aspirational elements are in danger of drowning out the more immediately achievable elements. I therefore make no apology for having focused in my statement on what the United Kingdom believes to be the effective measures relating to nuclear disarmament which can realistically be pursued next.

To sum up, I have tried to give you as clear a picture as I can of the United Kingdom's approach to nuclear disarmament. We are committed to article VI of the NPT. We agree with the agenda for achieving it set out in the "Principles and objectives". That means we want to see the CTBT verification system put in place and the Treaty come into force. It means we want the CD to get on with negotiating an FMCT. It means we want to see systematic and progressive efforts to reduce nuclear weapons globally - pursued in the immediate future through the START process. It means that we want to see non-proliferation efforts maintained and strengthened, and continuing progress made in other areas of arms control. The United Kingdom looks forward to the active and vigorous pursuit of this wide-ranging agenda.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland for his statement and for the kind words addressed to me. I now give the floor to the representative of Malaysia, Ambassador Hasmy.

Mr. HASMY (Malaysia): Allow me, Mr. President, to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference. I would also like to take this opportunity to wish you and all distinguished delegates attending this session a Happy New Year and to express the hope that this session, and this year, will witness some important breakthroughs which will advance the disarmament process, to which we are all committed, a step further towards the attainment of its goals. In this regard, my delegation wishes to take this opportunity to express its appreciation for the important and inspiring statement of the honourable Minister of Foreign Affairs of Italy, His Excellency Lamberto Dini.

This session of the Conference on Disarmament is meeting at a time of particular challenge to the CD following, as it does, soon after the signing of the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) through the resumed fiftieth session of the United Nations General Assembly. The adoption of the enabling resolution by the General Assembly, following the impasse in the CD, has raised questions about the role and effectiveness of the Conference. While not a member of the CD, my delegation would like to take this opportunity to stress the importance Malaysia attaches to the continued role and relevance of the Conference as the sole multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament, and that every effort should be made to preserve, strengthen and promote this role.

It is therefore imperative, at this and future sessions, for the Conference to assure the international community of its continued centrality and relevance in multilateral disarmament negotiations in the context of our times. In overcoming whatever negative impact the CTBT impasse might have on the CD it is important, first of all, for the Conference to address certain aspects of its work methods, decision-making processes and institutional arrangements which have affected its efficacy, and to find for itself a clear road-map and a reliable compass to help steer the multilateral negotiating process forward in the post-cold-war era. It will have to have a clear and, may I stress, updated agenda, a sense of urgency, and a commitment to achieve tangible results. It will have to improve its decision-making methods and strengthen its essential consensus-building approach.

More importantly, the Conference on Disarmament will have to address and reach consensus on the question of negotiating mandates not only in respect of the ad hoc committees already established in 1994, but not reconvened since then, but also new ones in response to the new tasks being assigned to it by the General Assembly. The Conference will have, for instance, to come to grips with the issue of the banning of the production of fissile materials for weapon purposes, on which a mandate to establish an ad hoc "fissban committee" had already been reached in 1995 but, regrettably, it has never been convened. Clearly, in resolving the impasse that has beset the CD on these difficult issues there is a need for renewed commitment and, more importantly, political will on the part of CD members, especially the nuclear-weapon member States, which should exercise the necessary leadership role that they, singly or severally, can and ought to play, to get the CD out of its present situation.

In charting its future course, my delegation feels that it is important that the Conference learn from the lessons of the past, in particular from its recent CTBT negotiations experience, so as to avoid repeating processes and methodologies that would further undermine rather than strengthen the Conference. My delegation is confident that the members of the CD will find the collective wisdom and creativity in fine-tuning the work methods of the Conference. We also remain hopeful that on the basis of the continued commitments of member States of the Conference to the shared goals of global disarmament it will be able to resolve the many difficult issues on its agenda, including the contentious issue of a fissile "cut-off."

In speaking about the fissile "cut-off" issue, my delegation is of the view that a ban on the production of fissile materials for weapons purposes, which has been a long-standing goal in nuclear disarmament, would indeed be a desirable goal. It would constitute an important step towards deepening further the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. My delegation therefore supports the early conclusion of a "cut-off" treaty as it would complement and reinforce existing unilateral, bilateral and other multilateral nuclear disarmament mechanisms such as the NPT and the CTBT. Clearly, for such a ban to be effective there must be foolproof international control of all fissile materials - hence the importance, in any fissile "cut-off" arrangement, of an effective international control regime. It is imperative, therefore, for the present impasse to be resolved as soon as possible to allow substantive negotiations to begin.

However, in tackling this sensitive issue, in this and future sessions, the Conference would be wise to learn from the lessons of the recent past so as to avoid being bogged down in similar problems faced during the CTBT negotiations. My delegation would therefore appeal to members of this Conference, especially those with particularly strong national positions on the issue, to demonstrate a cooperative and accommodating attitude and forge the required consensus in order to move the process forward. This issue cannot be set aside much longer, if the Conference is to maintain its credibility in the eyes of the international community, but in doing so it should be handled with care, creativity and sufficient flexibility with a view to reconciling seemingly irreconcilable positions of member States.

During the fifty-first session of the United Nations General Assembly Malaysia introduced, on behalf of the co-sponsors, a resolution pertaining to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the legality of the use and threat of use of nuclear weapons. The adoption of resolution 51/45 M by a large majority of non-nuclear-weapon States - 115 to be exact - was a testimony to the serious concern, indeed frustration, of the international community over the lack of genuine seriousness and the extremely slow pace in negotiations on nuclear disarmament leading to the ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons. Malaysia was particularly gratified to have had the support of many members of this Conference, including a nuclear-weapon State and a few developed Western member States. The resolution, *inter alia*, reinforced the unanimous opinion of the world Court which stressed that States parties to the NPT have a legal obligation not only to pursue "negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects", in accordance with article VI of the NPT, but also to "bring to a conclusion" such negotiations. It was an unambiguous message for the nuclear-weapons States to adopt a more serious approach in fulfilling their Treaty commitment to embark on serious negotiations on nuclear disarmament leading to their ultimate elimination.

(Mr. Hasmy, Malaysia)

While General Assembly resolution 51/45 M did not specifically call on the CD to begin negotiations on a nuclear weapons convention per se, it did call on States to commence negotiations in 1997 leading to the conclusion of such a convention. In recognition of the central role of this Conference in the multilateral disarmament negotiating process, as reflected in its preambular paragraph, the resolution, while keeping the options open in respect of the negotiating forum for the nuclear weapons convention, clearly expects this Conference, by virtue of its position, to commence a negotiating process on nuclear disarmament, which would ultimately lead to the conclusion of a nuclear weapons convention. In this regard, it is important for the nuclear-weapon States to adopt a more positive orientation towards both the United Nations General Assembly resolution and the world Court opinion itself, if they are really committed to the goal of total elimination of nuclear weapons.

My delegation would therefore strongly urge the CD to establish immediately an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament, as called for in the last and previous sessions of the United Nations General Assembly, which will consider the various aspects of nuclear disarmament already on its agenda, as well as to address those other General Assembly resolutions pertaining to nuclear disarmament, including resolution 51/45 M. Mindful of rule 27 of its rules of procedure, this Conference can ill afford to ignore those resolutions indefinitely, if it wishes to ensure continued international confidence in it and to continue to occupy centre stage and pre-eminence in the multilateral disarmament negotiating process.

My delegation would also like to take this opportunity to raise the question of the further enlargement of the Conference on Disarmament, an issue that was addressed in United Nations General Assembly resolution 51/47 A, which was overwhelmingly adopted at the last United Nations General Assembly. Inasmuch as we welcome the expansion of the Conference up to its current strength of 60 member States, my delegation is of the view that a number of States, including Malaysia, that have shown an active interest in global disarmament matters and the work of this Conference in particular, have, regrettably, not been accommodated. My delegation continues to hold the view that, subject to the need to ensure the manageability and effectiveness of the CD, all genuinely interested States should be allowed to participate on an equal footing as disarmament, particularly nuclear disarmament, is an issue of vital importance to States, big or small, developed or developing. We believe that the inclusion of those actively interested States, such as Malaysia, which applied for membership in September 1993, would allow for even greater representation of views on issues of critical importance to humanity, thereby contributing substantively to the work of the Conference. We would, therefore, urge the Conference to address the question of enlargement as a matter of priority so as to facilitate the full and early participation of the remaining applicant States which have been patiently waiting for a positive outcome for several years.

In conclusion, let me assure you of the continuing strong support of Malaysia for the important and indispensable work of the Conference. We are of the view that given the positive global political climate following the end of the cold war, the work of the Conference has assumed even increased significance in that opportunities that did not exist during the period of heightened East-West tension are now present, both in respect of conventional and, more importantly, nuclear disarmament. The Conference should take full advantage of the changed global situation and press ahead in fulfilling the role that the international community expects it to play so as to ensure that the world would be a much safer habitat for humanity. It would indeed be a pity if the Conference allows itself to be mired in procedural wranglings and tactical manoeuvres and in the process loose the opportunity to achieve the breakthroughs that are well within its grasp.

My delegation wishes you, Mr. President, and distinguished delegates attending this session of the Conference every success in your deliberations.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Malaysia for his statement, and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Myanmar, Ambassador Aye.

Mr. AYE (Myanmar): Mr. President, may I first extend to you the warm congratulations of my delegation on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament at the beginning of its 1997 session. It has been our experience that the early stage of the Conference's annual session is always a challenging task for all of us. I am confident that your diplomatic skills and qualities of personal leadership will lead us to a smooth start of our collective endeavours in the CD. I assure you of the fullest cooperation of my delegation in helping discharge your duties. I should like to take this occasion to thank your predecessor, Ambassador Ludwik Dembinski of Poland, for the excellent manner in which he conducted our work.

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome in our midst His Excellency Mr. Lamberto Dini, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Italy, and to listen with interest to his statement, which no doubt constitutes an important contribution to the work of the Conference on Disarmament.

I also take this occasion to extend a cordial welcome to our new colleagues who have taken up their duties as representatives of their countries to the Conference on Disarmament, and look forward to benefiting from their experience and wisdom: Ambassador Mernier of Belgium, Ambassador Campbell of Australia, Ambassador Dembri of Algeria, Ambassador Chowdhury of Bangladesh, and Ambassador Corrales Leal of Venezuela.

As I take the floor for the first time in the Conference on Disarmament following the adoption of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty by the United Nations General Assembly last September, I would like to share a few thoughts on the subject. My delegation takes the opportunity to welcome the adoption of the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty in New York. Although the Conference on Disarmament found itself unable to endorse it, the treaty was nevertheless a significant achievement by the Conference, for which we owe a special debt of gratitude to the diplomatic skills of Chairman Ambassador Ramaker and his delegation.

It has often been mentioned that the treaty is not perfect, but it is the best that the CD can produce, given the prevailing circumstances. An end to nuclear-test expositions by all States in all environments for all time is an essential step in preventing the qualitative improvement and development of nuclear weapons and their further proliferation.

This, taken together with other follow-up measures, will constitute positive steps toward nuclear disarmament, and the intended objective of the total elimination of all nuclear weapons. Hence the necessity for the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty to attract universal acceptance and adherence.

The present-day international political climate has continued to afford us a welcome opportunity to pursue further efforts toward arms limitation and disarmament. There exists a necessity to explore new approaches in addressing disarmament issues, and to move away from outmoded strategic concepts and doctrines of a bygone era. It is in this context that my delegation perceives a rapidly expending international consensus directed toward the nuclear-weapon States in efforts to encourage them to review and revise their nuclear policies and doctrines.

A case in point is the advisory opinion handed down by the International Court of Justice less than a year ago. An advisory opinion to the effect that the threat or use of nuclear weapons would generally be contrary to international law applicable in armed conflict, and in particular, the principles and rules of humanitarian law. Additionally, the legal opinion was offered that there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control.

The United Nations General Assembly adopted, at its fifty-first session, resolution 51/45 O on nuclear disarmament with an overwhelming majority of 110 votes in favour. The main thrust of the resolution is that it calls upon the Conference on Disarmament to establish, on a priority basis, an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament to commence negotiations early this year on a phased programme of nuclear disarmament, and for the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons within a time-bound framework through a nuclear weapons convention.

In this context, we welcome and fully support the proposal of 28 delegations that are members of the CD for a programme of action for the elimination of nuclear weapons, contained in document CD/1419 of 7 August 1996. My delegation is one of the co-sponsors of this important document. The proposed programme of action outlines a phased programme of nuclear disarmament measures, leading to the total elimination of nuclear weapons. We believe that this concrete proposal can be taken as a basis for, and will contribute to, nuclear disarmament negotiations in the CD.

My delegation's position needs no further elaboration on this question. We are in favour of establishing a separate full-fledged ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament in the CD, on a priority basis, at the beginning of this session, to commence substantive negotiations on the subject.

(Mr. Aye, Myanmar)

My delegation also holds the view that there exists an urgent need to re-establish the Ad Hoc Committee on Prohibition of the Production of Fissile Materials for Nuclear Weapons and Other Nuclear Explosive Devices, and commence negotiations on this important subject. The terms of reference and a good starting-point for the work of this Ad Hoc Committee have been already formulated in the report submitted to the CD by Ambassador Shannon in document CD/1299 of 24 March 1995.

The issue of negative security assurances is a matter of paramount importance for non-nuclear-weapon States. No doubt the most effective security assurance against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is the total elimination of these weapons. However, pending the attainment of this goal, it is imperative that we have in place effective international arrangements to prevent the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States.

We feel that we should pursue two parallel approaches in this regard. The first approach is to pursue the discussion and negotiations here in the CD. The second approach is to continue our efforts in the NPT context. The decision on the "Principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament" taken in the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference contains a programme of action. This programme contains, inter alia, a call for efforts to take further steps that could take the form of an internationally binding instrument to protect non-nuclear-weapon States party to the treaty from the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

Having said this, I should like to submit some thoughts of my delegation with regard to the programme of work for the CD in 1997. There can be two options, in the form of a concentrated programme, or an extended programme. Under the concentrated programme, we could establish two ad hoc committees, one on nuclear disarmament and the other on a fissile materials ban. The President of the Conference will no doubt carry on further consultations on the remaining items.

The alternative, to which I refer as the extended programme, is to establish ad hoc committees on nuclear disarmament, a fissile material ban, prevention of an arms race in outer space, transparency in armaments and negative security assurances.

If we are to consider the concentrated programme just mentioned, and in the event that the CD finds itself unable to establish separate ad hoc committees on nuclear disarmament and on fissile materials, we may possibly reach consensus to establish an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament with two working groups, i.e. one working group on nuclear disarmament and another working group on fissile materials. This can be an alternative compromise formula, which merits serious consideration by the member States of the CD. And given the experience we have had in the recent past, the CD can handle effectively one ad hoc committee at a time and perhaps two at most.

Several delegations hold the view that we have a balanced agenda including the question of conventional weapons. In this regard I would like to express our delegation's deep appreciation to the Secretary-General of the CD and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, for his valuable contribution to our ongoing discussions on the agenda for the current session of the Conference.

While considering the agenda for this year, we believe that identifying the right issues for the CD is of primary importance. Transparency in armaments is partly related to conventional arms and partly to other weapons of mass destruction. Accordingly, my delegation feels that TIA should not confine itself to the issue of conventional weapons. We should find suitable means to accommodate the concerns of parties who attach high importance to the issue of weapons of mass destruction.

With regard to anti-personnel landmines, there have been mechanisms and instruments already worked out by the international community outside the context of the CD. There is also a question of how we envisage the outcome of our work. Are we envisaging a totally new treaty on the subject or an amendment to the existing one? These are questions to be addressed before we proceed further on the subject.

I conclude by emphasizing that it remains our firm conviction that nuclear disarmament should be the central issue in laying down the agenda for this year. We must necessarily resolve this issue in a satisfactory manner in order to pave the way for the smooth commencement of substantive work in the CD this year and indeed in later years. Let us, therefore, face up to this reality, and spare no efforts to find ways and means to move forward in this area.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Myanmar for his statement, and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the Director-General at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland, Ambassador Reimaa.

Mr. REIMAA (Finland): I would also like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on the assumption of the presidency of the Conference and I wish you success in this demanding task. Let me also, on behalf of the Finnish delegation, welcome the most interesting contribution made here this morning by His Excellency Mr. Dini, Foreign Minister of Italy.

The conclusion of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty negotiations last year was a historic achievement. It is important that the Treaty enters into force as soon as possible. Finland calls for those countries which have not yet signed the CTBT to do so.

Once again, the Conference has proved its ability to respond to today's arms control needs, and to produce important results. The CD continues to play an important role as the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum.

But the CD cannot afford to rest on its reputation. The international community expects the Conference to move forward and to produce further results.

(Mr. Reimaa, Finland)

The Conference on Disarmament is facing new tasks and challenges, in both nuclear and conventional disarmament. We should as clearly as possible identify areas where the Conference has chances to move ahead. Each issue should be addressed on its own merits.

As the CTBT negotiations have been concluded, it is evident that the agenda of the Conference needs renewal. The new agenda should reflect the realities of today's world. It should be balanced and it should reflect the various interests affecting our work. A thorough discussion of the agenda may be necessary.

However, a discussion of the agenda as such has only little relevance outside this chamber. The CD needs to get back into the business of negotiating disarmament treaties and agreements. Pending the outcome of the agenda discussion, the Conference should set up the programme of work for this year's session and establish the necessary ad hoc committees without delay.

In 1995, an agreement was reached on the establishment of an ad hoc committee to negotiate a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. It is time for the Ad Hoc Committee to start its work. Differences relating to the scope and other aspects of the "cut-off" treaty should be addressed during the negotiations.

The humanitarian catastrophe caused by the indiscriminate use of anti-personnel landmines calls for urgent international action. During the past year, the international support for a total ban on anti-personnel landmines has grown. Finland supports a global, legally binding and verifiable ban on anti-personnel landmines.

The question of transferring the anti-personnel landmines discussion into concrete and serious negotiations became visible during last fall. The Ottawa process contributed to the political momentum. In the United Nations General Assembly, the usefulness and competence of the CD for real negotiations was for the first time truly discussed.

In order to obtain an effective ban, all the relevant countries should, from the outset, participate in the negotiations. As my Minister announced at the United Nations General Assembly last September, Finland regards the Conference on Disarmament as the most suitable forum for the negotiations on APLs. With its members and observers, the Conference on Disarmament is a negotiating body of more than 90 countries today. To reach concrete and notable results soon, a step-by-step approach could be considered as a way forward.

Now we are facing a procedural challenge. How to respond to this global call? The Conference on Disarmament should establish an ad hoc committee on anti-personnel landmines and start serious negotiations. Therefore, as an immediate operational task we would kindly invite you, Mr. President, to seek an urgent agreement on the appointment of a special coordinator to consult on the ways in which the issue of anti-personnel landmines could be best moved forward.

Let me, at this moment, very briefly welcome the announcement just coming from Washington concerning this particular item. We consider these signals very timely and useful to our immediate work.

Finland and 22 other countries became last year new members of the Conference. Finland supports a further expansion of the membership of the CD. In the meantime, we urge the candidates to participate actively in the work of the Conference.

Finland attaches great value to the work of the Conference. Consequently, Finland has appointed a Permanent Representative to the Conference on Disarmament. I have the privilege and honour to be Finland's first resident CD Ambassador as of 1 March. I look forward to good and productive cooperation with all member and observer delegations as well as with the Secretary-General of the Conference and his staff.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador Reimaa for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Poland, Ambassador Dembinski.

Mr. DEMBINSKI (Poland): First, Mr. President, I should like to join the previous speakers in congratulating you, a distinguished representative of the Republic of Korea, on the assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. I am confident that as a new member who has recently joined this body, you will bring new vigour and fresh insights to its endeavours. In wishing you every success in the discharge of your mandate - which, as is customary at the initial stage of each annual session of the CD, is both difficult and urgent - I want to assure you of full cooperation of my delegation and of my personal support.

I have asked for the floor as the outgoing President to report briefly on the results of my consultations which I pursued during the inter-sessional period. As will be recalled, at the end of its 1996 session, I was mandated by the Conference on Disarmament, first to continue consultations on the review of the agenda during the inter-sessional period and to report to it at the beginning of its 1997 session, and second to continue consultations on a further expansion of membership of the Conference and to report to it at the beginning of the 1997 session.

Let me first take up the question of the agenda of the Conference. In approaching that task I was fully conscious of its importance and urgency in order for the CD to be able to inaugurate its 1997 session on a constructive note - to adopt an agreed agenda and take indispensable decisions on the organization of its work for the year. At the same time, I was aware of the problems encountered throughout 1996 and, more specifically, of the contents of the report of 3 September 1996 presented to the Conference by the Special Coordinator, Ambassador Meghlaoui of Algeria, on his extensive consultations regarding the review of the agenda.

My consultations in the available time and with the available delegations, the relevant debate in the First Committee of the fifty-first session of the United Nations General Assembly and, finally, the review of the respective group positions within the framework of the Presidential consultations have led me to reach conclusions which regrettably are not optimistic. No important departures in the known positions of delegations have taken place since Ambassador Meghlaoui's report last September. Since these positions are still far apart, consensus needs to be pursued through further intensive consultations. My conclusion was informally brought to the attention of the incoming President.

At the same time, certain new, informal approaches to restructuring the CD's agenda have attracted the attention of some delegations as possibly more responsive to the new international realities and new challenges. Accordingly, I have kept the incoming President advised of this potential opening in the hope that he might wish to explore its implications further.

My consultations in regard to the question of a further expansion of CD membership have led me to conclude that further efforts need to be pursued in order to bridge the diverging positions of delegations. They range from a prevailing view that all applicant States should be accommodated, to concern for the determination of the maximum desirable size of the CD, to ensuring a regionally balanced representation and to admitting States with the longest applicant status and documented contribution to the CD work as observers. There appears to be an emerging consensus that it might be desirable for the President of the CD to appoint a special coordinator to pursue consultations in that regard.

In concluding my report I would be remiss without voicing my appreciation to the distinguished Secretary-General of the Conference, Mr. Petrovsky, his deputy, Mr. Bensmail, and all the secretariat staff for their support and competent assistance rendered to me throughout the inter-sessional period.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador Dembinski of Poland for his statement and for his kind words addressed to the Chair. I am sure I speak on behalf of all of us when I express our deep appreciation to Ambassador Dembinski for his untiring efforts in his attempts to build a consensus on the agenda of the Conference and on a further expansion of membership of the Conference. I thank him once again.

I should like to give the floor to the representative of the United States of America, Ambassador Ledogar.

Mr. LEDOGAR (United States of America): Until such time as your desire to curtail or dispense with the CD's ritual greetings and congratulations is more widely accepted, it would be misunderstood if I, too, did not congratulate you on your accession to the CD presidency and to tell you that, as you undertake your delicate tasks of guiding us in the start of our 1997 session, I assure you of the full cooperation of my delegation.

As we begin the 1997 session of the Conference on Disarmament, it gives me great pleasure to read out a statement to this body from President Clinton. I quote:

> "In my message to the Conference on Disarmament three years ago, I urged the negotiation of a comprehensive nuclear test ban at the earliest possible time. Your success in that negotiation, and the subsequent adoption of the Treaty by the United Nations General Assembly, will help create a safer world. The successful conclusion of the negotiation is evidence of the Conference's potential to respond to the challenges it now faces.
>
> "Now the Conference on Disarmament should take the next steps on the road to a more secure world.
>
> "Prompt conclusion of a ban on producing fissile material for use in nuclear explosives. Effectively cutting off the spigot for more nuclear weapons is a necessary step toward, and would greatly contribute to, the ultimate goal of nuclear disarmament.
>
> "Negotiation as soon as possible of a comprehensive, global ban on anti-personnel landmines. These weapons of war have caused terrible suffering to innocent civilians and represent an enormous obstacle to restoring a more hopeful life after a conflict has ended. All the children of the world deserve to walk the Earth in safety.
>
> "I call on the Conference to press forward with a renewed sense of purpose, to demonstrate to the world its capability to take these key steps to advance the process of nuclear and conventional disarmament."

As I and many of my colleagues have stated, the CD's first priority in the field of nuclear disarmament should be to negotiate a treaty to ban the production of fissile material that could be used for nuclear weapons purposes. Such a negotiation would fulfil not only the requirement set forth in the "Principles and objectives" document approved by consensus at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference, it would also represent a major step forward in the ongoing process of reducing the number of nuclear weapons as well as in preventing their proliferation in the world. Clearly it would be another major step in the continuum of actions that has been under way for some time now to make progress toward the ultimate goal of the elimination of nuclear weapons. For these reasons, I hope we all will be able to re-establish, as was approved by this body almost two years ago, an ad hoc committee to negotiate a treaty on banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons.

As you heard in his statement to the CD which I just read out, President Clinton has also proposed that, in the field of conventional disarmament, this body begin the negotiation of a comprehensive, global ban on anti-personnel mines. In this regard, I would like to read out another statement - this one by the Press Secretary of the White House, issued in Washington last Friday, 17 January 1997.

> "President Clinton today announced that when the Conference on Disarmament opens its 1997 session in Geneva on Monday, the United States will seek to initiate negotiations on a worldwide treaty banning the use, production, stockpiling, and transfer of anti-personnel landmines. As the President said before the United Nations General Assembly in September, 'Our children deserve to walk the Earth in safety'. The United States hopes that the nations of the world will work with us to create that safety and ban the scourge of landmines, which every year kill or wound more than 25,000 civilians.
>
> "To give further impetus to this effort, the President has decided that the United States will observe a permanent ban on the export and transfer of anti-personnel landmines. This action builds on the Landmine Export Moratorium Act sponsored by Senator Patrick Leahy, an Act which has temporarily prohibited the export and transfer of these weapons since 1992. We urge all other nations to join us in stopping the export and transfer of these mines, which will both hasten the completion of a comprehensive ban and save many innocent lives. As a step toward a ban, the President has decided to cap our anti-personnel landmine stockpile at the current level of inventory.
>
> "President Clinton last May announced the United States's intention to achieve as soon as possible a worldwide ban on landmines. In December, in the United Nations General Assembly, nations voted 155-0 in favour of the United States-initiated resolution urging States to pursue such an agreement.
>
> "After extensive consultations with many countries, the President believes that the Conference on Disarmament offers the most practical and effective forum for achieving our aim of a ban that is global. Both the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty and the Chemical Weapons Convention were successfully negotiated in the Conference on Disarmament.
>
> "The United States looks forward to the opening of the Conference on Disarmament ... as an opportunity to begin discussion of these initiatives and to make early progress on starting negotiations. At the same time, the United States welcomes efforts outside that forum, including the free-standing process initiated by Canada, that can help provide momentum to our common goal."

The two statements I have just read indicate that this body has essential work to be done, work that my country hopes the CD will be able to take up forthwith. In essence, we are challenged with the opportunity to negotiate global disarmament agreements in both the nuclear and conventional fields in two specific areas, in addition to the more traditional agenda items on which the CD has been working in the past. I, and my delegation, hope that we all can set aside the politics of delay that have hamstrung the CD in its non-CTBT work for the past two years and that we can move forward on our agenda, especially in the two areas mentioned in President Clinton's statement to this body.

I look forward to working closely with you as we try to achieve these crucial objectives.

I will ask that you circulate as official CD documents President Clinton's statement as well as the White House Press Secretary's statement and a fact-sheet on United States initiatives on anti-personnel landmines.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of the United States of America for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Canada, Ambassador Moher.

Mr. MOHER (Canada): Mr. President, referring to the statement by the preceding speaker, I would like to associate myself with his opening comment and, in the absence of one dramatic reform, begin by congratulating you on your assumption of the presidency. We, as others, look forward to working with you on the many challenges ahead and are confident that you will be able to steer us through any shoals we encounter along the way. I would also like to join others in welcoming our new colleagues from Algeria, Australia, Bangladesh, Belgium and Venezuela and we were certainly also honoured to listen carefully to the words from the distinguished Foreign Minister of Italy earlier this morning.

As the Conference on Disarmament begins its work in 1997, Canada remains committed to contributing to fruitful discussions and substantive negotiations on a broad range of disarmament, arms control, and non-proliferation issues. With the CD's consideration of the CTBT now concluded, we are able to turn our attention to other, pressing, matters. Like many, we believe that we must update and consolidate the CD's existing, anachronistic agenda. We need a relevant, focused, practical agenda to guide our discussions and negotiations into the next century.

We have put on record our ideas as to what such a reformed agenda might be. Those views were made known to the CD in September 1996, in the statement by the Western Group and the subsequent statement by Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

In our view, the agenda should incorporate action on both nuclear (and other weapons of mass destruction) and conventional weapons issues, without neglecting other issues. In that context, we welcome your efforts, Mr. President, to put forward a non-prioritized provisional list of items which, subject to further consultations on organizational and related arrangements, could constitute a draft provisional agenda for our work. As you know, we are prepared to begin further consultations on that basis.

Canada believes that nuclear disarmament is a central issue that the CD must address. But we must do so in a constructive way. The debate to date has sadly been characterized by categorical rejections on the one hand and theological demands on the other. This approach will not produce results. It will not advance the nuclear disarmament agenda.

For this reason, we have suggested the creation of a mechanism for the substantive discussion of nuclear disarmament issues, with a view to identifying if and when one or more specific issues should be the subject of negotiation.

We also believe that conventional disarmament is a pressing and central issue which deserves the attention of the CD. For example, based on the earlier P-5 guidelines for conventional arms transfers, the CD could consider measures to enhance transparency and substantive dialogue and identify further steps for international action. This would be a logical continuation of our earlier work on transparency in armaments and build upon the evolving United Nations arms register process.

Other issues should also be addressed. Issues which will help us contribute to a secure and peaceful twenty-first century. For example, the CD should consider the negotiation of a legally binding instrument to prevent the weaponization of outer space.

For sake of brevity, an outline paper which elaborates further on these ideas will be attached to this statement, which we are circulating.

In the context of our views on the CD's agenda, we again note the agreement among CD members, based on the Shannon paper and mandate therein, to negotiate a ban on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. The CD should begin these negotiations immediately. There is no doubt that the passage of time since 1995, other developments and the complexity of the issue itself all mean that the CD will need to do considerable definitional, organizational and operational work so that the Ad Hoc Group established to negotiate on the basis of the Shannon mandate will be able to implement successfully our earlier decision. Canada sees no reason why we should not begin that work immediately.

Certainly, as a country firmly committed to fulfilling our NPT responsibilities, we believe we have an obligation to begin work - now - on such a "cut-off" convention. The global community, through the United Nations, and during the NPT Review and Extension Conference, has urged the CD to get on with concluding such a convention.

I would like to speak for a moment on the issue of anti-personnel mines. The urgent conclusion of a comprehensive treaty banning the use, as well as the production, transfer and stockpiling of anti-personnel mines is a top Canadian foreign policy priority.

Delegations will find attached to this text a progress report on the Ottawa Process of drafting and concluding by December 1997 a comprehensive treaty banning anti-personnel mines. Canada is strongly committed to working with the concerned global community to put in place, by December 1997, a new norm against these weapons. The work to eliminate AP mines will not end in 1997. We will need to universalize this norm. And the challenge of detecting and clearing the millions of AP mines already in the ground, and assisting the many victims, will continue for decades. However, we will have taken an enormous step forward in meeting the AP mine challenge.

The support of 155 countries for the recent United Nations General Assembly resolution calling for an international agreement to ban the production, stockpiling, transfer and - most importantly - use of AP mines demonstrates that there is global recognition of the need to act.

Our consultations in every region of the world, particularly in those States most affected by mines, have confirmed to us that the will to act quickly also exists. On 29 November 1996 the Central American and Caribbean Foreign Ministers formally endorsed the Ottawa Process and indicated their support for the signature of a treaty in December 1997. Many other Governments have done likewise. The momentum towards a ban continues to grow.

We are also encouraged by the fact that the process for developing a comprehensive treaty has already emerged: a process which is credible, transparent and open to all countries. As foreseen in the Agenda for Action produced during the Ottawa meeting, the first such event, hosted by Austria, will take place in Vienna, 12-14 February 1997. This meeting will provide an opportunity for a full discussion of what a convention might look like. We hope that all delegations in this room will be represented at that meeting. We place special emphasis on ensuring the active participation of the widest possible range of countries, particularly the many mine-affected and developing States who live every day with the scourge of AP mines.

At the same time, we are also aware that some colleagues in the CD believe this issue is an appropriate one for the CD to address. We know there are differing views on whether and how this might be done. Canada is prepared to see this matter further explored in our discussions on the CD agenda - recognizing of course that there is already a process under way which has political momentum and a practical agenda.

Thus, if the CD is to deal with this problem, it should move quickly, with clarity of purpose and determination, to deal in an urgent manner with the political and humanitarian imperatives of the AP mine crisis. In Canada's view, it should deal with the AP mine issue in a comprehensive way - developing a mandate and quickly concluding negotiations to ban the use, production, stockpiling and transfer of AP mines.

But, in any event, Canada believes that the impetus, direction and commitment of the many countries working toward the urgent conclusion of an AP mine treaty and any efforts undertaken in the CD must be complementary and mutually reinforcing.

There is tremendous public support for a ban on AP mines from around the world. We must draw on this energy and ensure that all our efforts contribute to leading us quickly to realize our common objective: an AP mine ban.

We are all aware that discussions and negotiations in the CD do not take place in a vacuum. As our 1997 CD session begins, we are also beginning to consider the next review of the NPT within the context of a strengthened and qualitatively different review process.

As we hope our work in 1997 and beyond will confirm, the 1995 decision to extend indefinitely the NPT and to adopt the "Principles and objectives" document qualitatively changed the international community's approach to this review process - a process which will necessarily be focused on the Treaty itself, but will be guided and, we hope, inspired by the "Principles and objectives" and our commitment to such a strengthened review process.

We have already agreed "to consider principles, objectives and ways in order to promote the full implementation of the Treaty" so that we can make recommendations to the Review Conference on "areas in which, and the means through which, further progress should be sought in the future". These two quotations should remind us that the review process we will launch in April is, in fact, qualitatively different from past reviews. It must deal with substance and process issues, not just the latter, from the very beginning. For our part, we will work to ensure that this change will be reflected, from the outset, in the work of the PrepCom.

There is also other important work happening in the arms control and disarmament context. In 1997, the Ad Hoc Group dealing with the strengthening of the BTWC has agreed to intensify its work. That decision was supported at the Fourth BTWC Review Conference in December 1996. We hope that the Ad Hoc Group will be able to move quickly and smoothly to rolling-text-based negotiations in order to draft a legally binding instrument that will strengthen our confidence in compliance with the Convention, including through the establishment of an appropriate and effective verification regime.

Further, we are pleased that the Chemical Weapons Convention will enter into force on 29 April of this year. We recall the Poland-Canada-Mexico-India-sponsored resolution at last fall's United Nations General Assembly First Committee session. That resolution called upon all States that have not yet done so to sign and/or ratify the Convention without delay. The resolution stressed the importance to the Convention that all possessors of chemical weapons, production facilities and development facilities, including the United States of America and Russian Federation as the only declared possessors of chemical weapons, should be among the original parties to the Convention. This position was endorsed and reinforced in the Final Document of the Fourth BTWC Review Conference. We reiterate this call here.

Let me close by congratulating you again and renewing our commitment to work with you, and all delegations, to make the CD's 1997 session a productive one.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Canada for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. That concludes my list of speakers for today. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor?

As I announced at the beginning of this meeting, I shall now suspend the plenary and immediately convene an informal meeting which will be open to members only in order to consider the requests received from non-members to participate in our work.

The meeting was suspended at 12.20 p.m. and resumed at 12.30 p.m.

The PRESIDENT: The 751st plenary meeting is resumed.

I should like to take up for decision requests for participation in our work by States not members of the Conference. These requests, contained in document CD/WP.479, have been received from the following States: Brunei Darussalam, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Gabon, Ghana, Greece, Holy See, Iceland, Ireland, Kazakstan, Kuwait, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Lithuania, Madagascar, Malaysia, Malta, Mauritius, Oman, Portugal, Qatar, Seychelles, Singapore, Slovenia, Sudan, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tunisia, Uruguay and Zambia. May I take it that the Conference decides to invite these States to participate in our work in accordance with its rules of procedure?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: This concludes our business for today. Does any delegation wish to take the floor at this stage?

Mr. BENJELLOUN-TOUIMI (Morocco) (translated from French): I simply wished to raise a question. I see that the work of the Conference is beginning at the customary pace of the last couple of years, that is to say, very slowly, and I was wondering whether you were intending to organize any consultations so as to try, not so much to break the deadlock, as to move the work of the Conference forward. I have listened with great care and interest to the very important statements that have been made by delegations today. They were well-organized statements which show clearly that there are major differences among the members of the Conference on the agenda and the programme of work. I was wondering whether a progression from one Wednesday to the next, coming here to deliver fine statements, would be enough to begin the work of the Conference, or whether we shouldn't also give a thought to intensive consultations among the different delegations, under your distinguished auspices, in order to make progress.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Ambassador of Morocco, and as I stated in my opening statement I will carry on the consultations with a view to reaching as early as possible a consensus on the agenda for the 1997 session, together with, if possible, the concrete programmes on the individual agenda items.

The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on Thursday, 23 January 1997 at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.752
23 January 1997

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE SEVEN HUNDRED AND FIFTY-SECOND PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 23 January 1997, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Sun (Republic of Korea)

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 752nd plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

I have on my list of speakers for today the representatives of France, Austria, Germany, Egypt, Bangladesh and Belgium.

I should like to welcome the new representative of Mongolia, Ambassador Bold, and as usual assure him of our cooperation and support.

Before giving the floor to those inscribed today, I should like to inform you that further requests have been received from Nepal and Armenia, States not members of the Conference, for participation in our work during 1997. With your agreement, I should like to take a decision on these requests without considering them first at an informal meeting. It would be my intention to take them up at the end of this plenary meeting.

I now give the floor to the representative of France, Ambassador Bourgois.

Mrs. BOURGOIS (France) (translated from French): Mr. President, allow me as the year begins to extend to you my best wishes for success. The international community is counting on you. Let me assure you of the complete cooperation of my country and my delegation.

We are entering a year which will be a turning-point. The year which has just ended was a year of harvests. In the area of nuclear disarmament, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, a treaty drawn up by this Conference, was opened for signature on 24 September 1996. A diplomatic exercise which began more than 40 years ago was thus brought to a conclusion. The exceptional procedure which made this result possible emphasized the extent to which the CTBT negotiations were no ordinary negotiations. They were imbued with such contradictory expectations and symbolism that the fate of President Ramaker's text appeared, if not more important than that of the Conference on Disarmament itself, at least closely linked with the credibility and even the survival of this institution. What would have happened to the Conference if it had failed? But success was achieved. With 139 signatories already, including 41 of the 44 States whose ratification is necessary, we are entitled to hope that the entry into force of the treaty is not an unrealistic dream.

The year now beginning must be a year for fresh sowing. The Conference on Disarmament is once again at a crossroads, as in 1993, after the conclusion of the Chemical Weapons Convention. The first task that we must tackle is that of determining which road to take.

Mr. President, since you took up the Chair of our institution you have carried out consultations on what the content of a new agenda for the Conference on Disarmament might be. You have presented us with the initial outlines around which your ideas are organized. I can only encourage you to go further. It seems to me that the idea you have adopted of drawing up a list of subjects derived from our programme of action which could guide us this year should be decided on rapidly in the light of the consultations which you have conducted. If you believe that an agreement can emerge and that some topics can be the subject of genuine negotiations, then you must move forward as soon as possible. However, the cautious conclusions of your predecessor, President Dembinski, to whom I would also like to pay tribute here, mean that we must also consider the possibility that agreement may not be reached or may take some time to materialize. Perhaps in that case you might consider speedily adopting the solution which over the past two years has enabled us to agree on the launching of concrete negotiations while respecting everyone's point of view: you could, while leaving pending agreement by the Conference on its agenda, note that no one is opposed to establishing one or several ad hoc committees with specific tasks, in other words, negotiating mandates.

My country is well aware of the positions of the various sides, and we respect them. But we do not a priori consider them irreconcilable, because this year the Conference is not starting from scratch. At a time when we have to choose which road to take, we must consider how we can make the best use of the lessons we have learned. What are these lessons? And what are the elements of consensus or quasi-consensus which should inspire our proceedings?

In the nuclear area, if we consider the United Nations General Assembly, the venue for the highest expression of international public opinion, I must note that in 1993, in resolution 48/75 L, the Assembly recommended by consensus the negotiation in the most appropriate forum of a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for the manufacture of nuclear weapons. In March 1995, prompted by Ambassador Shannon, the delegations of the Conference on Disarmament laid down the mandate of the ad hoc committee to negotiate a treaty on the basis of that resolution. In May 1995, that commitment to draw up a universal treaty was taken up formally in the section devoted to nuclear disarmament in the declaration of principles and objectives subscribed to by the 185 members of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

As you know, France has already taken a number of steps at the national level in this area. As of 1992 my country stopped producing weapons-grade plutonium at Marcoule, and stopped producing highly enriched uranium at Pierrelatte in 1996. Furthermore, in 1996 the President of the Republic announced that those two plants would be closed. France no longer produces fissile material for use in nuclear weapons. With the closures at the Plateau d'Albion and Mururoa and the reductions I have just referred to, France has made a unique effort towards nuclear disarmament, an effort which is consistent with deterrence based on strict sufficiency. My country has therefore unilaterally made irreversible commitments which must facilitate the success of the negotiations on the "cut-off" treaty. We expect as much from countries which have not yet made such commitments, or not on such a scale.

Only a treaty negotiated in the Conference on Disarmament, as the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty was, can confer on these commitments the universality which is an essential element to enable the international community to make progress towards nuclear disarmament. Such a treaty will put an end to any possibility of a quantitative resumption of the nuclear arms race, just as the CTBT has put an end to the possibility of a qualitative resumption by making it impossible to develop new types of nuclear weapons which are even more sophisticated. It will impose new constraints on the nuclear-weapon States and any other States which may possess weapons-grade fissile material, and will thus effectively promote nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation in all its aspects. Negotiations on the treaty to ban the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other explosive devices will require a great deal of work because it will be necessary to address the delicate issue of the scope of the treaty, arrangements for verifying compliance with each party's obligations and also implementation. The verification provisions will, if they are properly negotiated, be able to introduce a note of trust which is fundamental in relations among States, both nuclear and non-nuclear, whether or not they have signed the NPT.

To summarize, my country remains convinced, as others are, including our friends from the Non-Aligned group, that because of their importance, nuclear issues must remain at the centre of our Conference's attention. If negotiations are able to begin on the "cut-off", France will do what it can to promote their rapid initiation and speedy conclusion. On the other hand, however, the idea of embarking on a road leading to the setting up of an ad hoc committee entrusted with all the issues of nuclear disarmament is triply problematical for us, or at least raises some questions in our minds. First of all, with regard to procedure, as we are only too aware, and as we hear every day, this is a time for saving money, and it would not be in the interest of the Conference to set up a mechanism, committee or any other arrangement which lacked a precise negotiating mandate and would be limited to disputatious discussions of generalities. The Conference on Disarmament is not a local pub or bar: it should not duplicate the discussions in the First Committee, it should not overlap with the Disarmament Commission. Although there are some who hold the opposite view, this is an automatic corrollary of its restricted membership.

Secondly, with regard to the substance, there is a very clear logic in making the "cut-off" the second set of multilateral negotiations on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation after the CTBT. If we consider other measures which might be proposed, I cannot see any which has any real meaning, in a gradual and step-by-step process, as long as the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons continues. My country can see in advance that the "cut-off" negotiations presuppose the imposition of new restrictions, new restrictions on non-nuclear-weapon States, whether or not they are parties to the NPT; new restrictions too on the States which have nuclear weapons. Today these are the only type of negotiations which can produce results in both disarmament and non-proliferation.

Lastly, from a practical point of view, we need results. Trying to evade the "cut-off" negotiations, which constitute an essential stage, would mean remaining at the stage of declamatory phrases or placing oneself in the final perspective of nuclear disarmament in the framework of general and complete disarmament: in either case, no concrete progress can be expected in the near future.

France is well aware of the difficulty of reaching an agreement and the fact that the negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material will be long and complex. We know that 185 countries have committed themselves here to implementing the Shannon mandate, agreed two years ago, and beginning the negotiations on a "cut-off", without any conditions and without any linkage to any other measures, but we are also aware that two or three partners are not ready to do so. We do not hope to force them to do so. However, we do hope to convince them to do so.

It also falls to this Conference to consider the second facet of its mission, the conventional facet. The preliminary work for holding a possible fourth special session of the United Nations General Assembly on disarmament have indicated that this is of equal priority in the view of the international community. In this field as well the Conference is not starting from scratch, and here again measures taken at the national level by some countries, including my own, have pointed the way to go. Since our last meetings last September, France has taken major steps to combat the scourge of anti-personnel mines. On 2 October 1996 the Council of Ministers decided that France would renounce the use of anti-personnel mines. This non-use rule allows of no geographical exceptions. It applies to all categories of anti-personnel mines. The only derogation provided for is extremely limited and concerns cases of absolute necessity relating to force security with the express authorization of the Government. France is thus the first permanent member of the Security Council to adopt such a firm position on the use of anti-personnel mines. Furthermore, the decisions to abandon the export and production of anti-personnel mines, which were reached in 1993 and 1995 respectively, will be covered by a bill which is soon to be submitted to Parliament. The programme of reduction of the anti-personnel mine stockpile by destruction undertaken in September 1996 will be continued. These decisions are consistent with the objectives set by the President of the Republic of mobilizing the international community to a greater degree to make progress towards a total and comprehensive ban on anti-personnel mines. You are also aware that on 1 October 1996 the European Union took joint action on anti-personnel mines and decided to combat and put an end to the indiscriminate use of these weapons and their proliferation throughout the world, thereby contributing to resolving the problems which they cause, have caused and will cause.

The international community as a whole has taken a stand on this subject, in a virtually consensual manner, in endorsing the objective of a total ban on anti-personnel mines by a very large majority with no negative votes in United Nations General Assembly resolution 51/45 L. As you know, France supported that text. But you are aware that we also want the resolution not to remain purely declamatory but to contain practical instructions - an explicit mandate given to the Conference on Disarmament to negotiate such an agreement. During the discussions in the First Committee, we noted that our ideas on this matter were increasingly understood and even shared. The decision taken by President Clinton on 17 January 1997 to a certain extent rewards our efforts and those of other countries which shared our ideas: we welcome that decision with particular satisfaction.

The establishment of an ad hoc committee to negotiate a treaty for the total prohibition of anti-personnel mines is facing four difficulties today. First, some claim that anti-personnel mines are a humanitarian issue which does not really fall in the Conference's purview. Personally I would prefer to note that the question of mines certainly does have a humanitarian aspect: combating the indiscriminate use of mines. As such the modified Protocol II on prohibitions or restrictions on the use of mines and other devices was negotiated and adopted on 3 May 1996: from the humanitarian point of view we should work to make it universal. But the question of mines contains also, and above all, the dimension of disarmament. Because mines are weapons, and as such for many countries they constitute one of the important components of their defence, an element of local or regional balance. Hence a comprehensive ban on this type of weapon by its very nature comes under the mandate of the Conference on Disarmament, which, I would remind you, the United Nations General Assembly unanimously and by consensus has reaffirmed to be the sole multilateral negotiating forum in the field of disarmament.

Secondly, other States, sometimes the same ones as those I have just referred to, consider that the Conference on Disarmament would not be able to tackle two parallel sets of negotiations. Agreeing on mines would mean abandoning efforts to make progress on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. I think this concern is excessive. Last year we were able to complete Protocol II and the CTBT in parallel. There is no reason why, if an agreement emerges in the nuclear field, we should not try to progress on both fronts. In any event France does not intend to hide behind mines in order to evade a discussion of the nuclear issue, which, with the "cut-off", remains a major priority.

Thirdly, other countries have expressed reservations concerning the very objective of a global ban on anti-personnel mines. In their view we should concentrate on the universality and the implementation of Protocol II. The task suggested to us by the United Nations General Assembly cannot be reduced to that objective. By coming out in favour of a total ban, we have opted for negotiations on an entirely new disarmament treaty. We must of course proceed with the requisite realism, and that involves adopting a phased approach. We must seek progressive, step-by-step agreement, with measures negotiated one after the other, leading gradually to a total ban. A ban on transfers should constitute the first stage, and that stage is certainly within our grasp.

Fourthly, others hesitate to take this path and are tempted by a different approach which would involve very rapid agreement among countries which have already renounced mines on the text of a total ban on these weapons, outside the Conference. Although we certainly recognize the political utility of all efforts aimed at facilitating the prohibition of anti-personnel mines, I must say that this approach would lose interest for us as soon as it left the political field and sought to pose as an alternative to the work of the Conference on Disarmament. This procedure would seem to us to be doomed to be ineffective, in a certain way: we do not need to hold discussions with the countries which have already renounced mines, we have to negotiate with those which produce, use and stockpile mines, if we want to reduce the number of deaths and avoid the appearance of new Cambodias, Somalias, Angolas or Bosnias. After all, the advocates of that approach themselves admit that their proposal is not based on negotiations: at the very most they envisage consultations. We, on the other hand, prefer an effective treaty, even if it takes longer to achieve, rather than a rapid agreement which wouldn't really change the situation on the ground. Effectiveness presupposes in particular that provision should be made for verification, as pointed out by France and 45 States which signed the Ouagadougou declaration on 6 December 1996. Only the Conference on Disarmament has the necessary expertise to meet that challenge.

In the context which I have just outlined, my country believes that the best chance we have here today to begin work which can produce rapid and concrete results which are understandable and expected by the entire international community lies in establishing as soon as possible an ad hoc committee to negotiate a comprehensive ban on anti-personnel mines by means of a step-by-step approach. In that committee, day after day, because it will be a standing committee, because everyone will be there, or will have an opportunity to be there, we will be able to work towards bringing our views closer together, reducing the divergences between us, and finally producing, developing, a concrete product. Today France has the honour to propose to the Conference on Disarmament that such a committee be established.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of France for her statement and for the kind words addressed to me. I now give the floor to the representative of Austria, Ambassador Kreid.

Mr. KREID (Austria): At the outset, Mr. President, our congratulations and best wishes to you, and be assured that we will do our best to make your task easier.

I am taking the floor today above all in order to provide to this Conference some information on the expert meeting on anti-personnel landmines which my Government will be hosting in Vienna from 12 to 14 February. Most of you are doubtless already aware of this initiative, since official invitations to this meeting have been sent to Governments last week. Given the sensitivity of the subject under consideration, we thought it appropriate to explain in the context of the CD the exact terms of reference and to explain Austria's motives for inviting to this meeting.

In view of the widespread and unwarranted suffering caused by the use of anti-personnel landmines the Austrian Government was motivated to act, both at the national and the international levels, in order to come to terms, once and for all, with this scourge. Thus, the Austrian Parliament has recently passed a law which bans the use, production, stockpiling and transfer of such mines in our country, where existing stockpiles had already been destroyed in 1995. If I am correctly informed, Austria is thus the first country to have taken this far-reaching step of legally banning APMs for good, but we know that other countries are about to follow suit and can only encourage all of you to consider appropriate similar action.

(Mr. Kreid, Austria)

We will circulate the text of the Austrian Federal Law as an official document of the Conference on Disarmament.

Yet my Government is also fully persuaded that lasting success cannot be achieved through spontaneous and isolated action, well intended as it may be. In view of the very limited progress achieved at the Review Conference on the United Nations Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons last year, Austria sees the urgent need for a separate effective legally binding international agreement to ban the use, stockpiling, production and transfer of anti-personnel landmines. At the Conference in Ottawa last October it became manifest that the size and regional diversity of the States sharing this view had reached the critical mass necessary for negotiations on such a convention and their early conclusion. Convinced of the feasibility of drafting such a text, Austria prepared a first tentative draft which met with considerable interest at the Ottawa Conference. Consequently, the Chairman of that meeting, the Canadian Foreign Minister, tasked Austria to present a draft at the Brussels Follow-up Meeting in June 1997.

Why is Austria hosting the Expert Meeting on the text of a convention to ban APLMs? Austria was encouraged to do so by the overwhelming support for United Nations General Assembly resolution 51/45 S. One hundred and fifty-five States voted in favour of the explicit call in operative paragraph 1 to "pursue vigorously an effective, legally binding international agreement to ban the use, stockpiling, production and transfer of [APMs] with a view to completing the negotiation as soon as possible".

We felt the urgency of the matter - and that means life or death or being maimed for 25,000 people a year - does not allow us to sit with crossed arms until every organizational and procedural detail for future negotiations is hammered out. We felt we could win precious time - and save human lives - if informal open discussions of what a convention might look like started already now. We thought a first tentative draft would be helpful to induce such discussions. While we do not start the real negotiations in Vienna, we will try to help to prepare them. We hope that all States represented in this room and many more will be present in Vienna and will actively contribute in the discussion. The responses received so far have been very encouraging. We have seen that there is interest for the meeting exceeding our own expectations. Already now, it is foreseeable that more countries will participate in Vienna than there are members in the CD. We seek in particular the input of mine-affected countries.

While it is well known that Austria is a staunch supporter of the Ottawa Process, let me state very clearly that the meeting in Vienna in no way prejudges the position of the participating countries on the form and the forum in which the negotiations are to be conducted. Austria does not even intend to discuss this issue in Vienna. Regardless of the forum in which the actual negotiations will be held, previous informal discussions on the text of a convention and a draft presented as a national paper but taking into account many comments received thereon will be useful.

Attached to my statement you will find an information sheet which resumes the key aspects of the Vienna meeting. It is foreseen to begin with an exchange of views on the key elements of a future convention. During this initial discussion, the International Campaign to Ban Landmines will be allowed to participate. After this, only the representatives of States and the United Nations as well as ICRC will proceed to an article-by-article review of the draft proposed by Austria. The informal and expert character of the meeting is underlined by the fact that no report will be adopted or any decision taken. On the basis of the comments received in the exchange of views, Austria will produce a revision of the draft, which will once again be distributed. Depending on the progress made at this first meeting, a second meeting will most probably be required in late May in order to elaborate further on the text which then would be presented by Austria as a national draft without prejudging the position of other countries at the June 1997 meeting in Belgium.

Let me reiterate the invitation by Austria to all States interested in the above-mentioned expert meeting. The Austrian Mission in Geneva is at delegations' disposal for any further information they might request. Austria is looking forward to the widest possible participation at this meeting and to your contributions to the text of an anti-personnel landmines convention.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Austria for his statement, and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Germany, Ambassador Hoffmann.

Mr. HOFFMANN (Germany): I would like to congratulate you most sincerely, Sir, upon your assumption of the responsible task of being this year's first President. We are fully aware that the first President of any CD session carries a special responsibility for bringing the Conference to an early start of meaningful and substantive work. This year, the burden of your office is especially heavy as, after the end of the CTBT negotiations, far-reaching decisions must be made which concern not only this year's session of the CD but will quite probably set the course for the CD in the years to come. I want to assure you of the full cooperation and support of the German delegation in bringing about a fruitful beginning of this CD session.

I also would like to pay tribute to Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and the United Nations Secretary-General's Personal Representative, and to his deputy, Mr. Abdelkader Bensmail, for the professional services they have been providing for the Conference on Disarmament.

Let me also welcome our new colleagues. I look forward to their invigorating support for our efforts.

I want, in particular, to thank you for the considerable effort you have made to arrive at an early agreement on the agenda for this session, as well as Mr. Petrovsky for his valuable contribution to this discussion. You have suggested an agenda which reflects very well the areas of priority which in the German view should be treated by the CD, and which addresses in a well-balanced way the two broad items of conventional and non-conventional disarmament. While nuclear disarmament remains one of the top priorities of this Conference, conventional disarmament and arms control must be addressed in greater depth in view of the large number of conventional armed conflicts and the tremendous suffering created by conventional weapons in many parts of the world. I welcome the fact that your agenda proposal contains those topics on which considerable discussions have taken place in the past, such as transparency in armaments and negative security assurances, and on which substantial work could be continued without undue delay. In my view, it should be possible on the basis of this proposed agenda to reach early agreement on a substantive work programme for the CD.

The United Nations General Assembly voted overwhelmingly on 10 September 1996 to open the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty for signature. Thus, the negotiations which the Conference on Disarmament had pursued with determination and vigour over the last years reached a successful conclusion. The CTBT aims at ending the development of ever more sophisticated and qualitatively new nuclear weapons. Properly monitored and enforced, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty will end the qualitative arms race and encourage much deeper cuts in nuclear arsenals than have been attempted thus far. It constitutes therefore not only an important contribution to horizontal and vertical non-proliferation but also, in the long run, towards nuclear disarmament.

By mid-January 1997 the number of CTBT States signatories reached 138. These States decided to bridge the period till entry into force of the Treaty by cooperating in the Preparatory Commission for the CTBTO in order "to ensure the operationalization of the Treaty's verification regime at entry into force", as it says in paragraph 13 of the "Text on the establishment of the Preparatory Commission". Germany is fully committed to this process and appeals to all States signatories to contribute constructively to an early start of the provisional secretariat's work and to all States to promote the early entry into force of the CTBT through timely ratification.

The agenda you have proposed contains two items to which Germany attaches particular priority. These two items are a “cut-off” of fissile material for nuclear weapons and a ban on anti-personnel mines. In our view, the time is ripe for the CD to start immediately substantive negotiation processes on these two subjects.

When the Non-Proliferation Treaty was extended indefinitely, it was further qualitatively strengthened by the decisions on “Strengthening the review process for the Treaty" and on “Principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament". The “Principles and objectives" make a significant contribution to some of the main areas of concern to the Conference on Disarmament, in particular nuclear disarmament and security assurances. The first step of the programme of action laid down in the “Principles and objectives" under the heading of nuclear disarmament, the negotiation of a nuclear-test-ban treaty, has been taken.

The second step should be a "cut-off" of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. The objective of such a multilateral and effectively verifiable "cut-off" treaty would be to cap the amount of fissile material available for nuclear weapons. Such a treaty would be a necessary complement to the CTBT.

Nations have long sought such a "cut-off" treaty. In 1993, the forty-eighth United Nations General Assembly finally adopted unanimously resolution 48/75 L calling for "cut-off" negotiations. Two years later - after many months of consultations and based on the valuable work of Canadian Ambassador Shannon - we achieved consensus in the CD on a mandate to negotiate the treaty called for in the resolution. The basis for "cut-off" negotiations being firmly laid, there is no justification in further delaying the establishment of the respective ad hoc committee.

The German Government attaches high priority to the immediate commencement of negotiations on such a convention as a further important contribution towards non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament.

In April 1996, Germany unconditionally renounced the use of anti-personnel mines. Existing stocks will be destroyed by the end of this year. In July 1996 the German Foreign Minister announced a seven-point action programme on anti-personnel mines. Its prime objective is an international ban on such mines. We must once and for all eradicate this cruel and inhumane weapon. This is why Germany strongly welcomes similar steps taken by a growing number of States as well as the widespread and still increasing support for a total ban within the international community. The joint action by the European Union, the Ottawa Declaration and, last but not least, the overwhelming support for the fifty-first United Nations General Assembly's resolution to ban anti-personnel mines are proof of this development. In this context, I wholeheartedly welcome the statement by Ambassador Kreid of Austria.

I would like to congratulate the Canadian Government on their initiative to create a global movement of like-minded States committed to a total ban on anti-personnel mines. The momentum of this process, which is fully compatible with other initiatives to pursue a total ban, has to be maintained and further developed. Considering its global approach, the number of participating States should be as high as possible.

The German Government is committed to the early conclusion of a legally binding international agreement to ban anti-personnel mines. It should be total in scope and - as to adherence - as global as possible. Germany is decided to work towards this objective by all effective means and in any appropriate forum. Having said this, it is, however, our view that the universal role of the CD and the expertise and experience accumulated over many years in this negotiating institution should be fully made use of in concluding a total ban on anti-personnel mines. We should, therefore, immediately begin discussions in the CD on how best to achieve this goal as proposed by a significant number of States, including recently the United States of America. In our view it is crucial that any negotiating mandate agreed upon should stipulate a clear obligation to reach a total ban. It should equally outline which concrete steps should be taken to reach this objective and when.

A universal and legally binding ban on anti-personnel mines is not only a matter of humanitarian concern and urgency but also - aiming at the elimination of an entire category of weapons - an important international arms control issue. Given the CD's unique role in negotiating universal arms control agreements, its failure to reach agreement on an issue as important as anti-personnel mines would not only disappoint the international community. It could also raise questions about the effectiveness of the Conference itself and put its future role at serious risk from emerging alternative procedures.

The CD has in the past successfully negotiated treaties on the total elimination of certain categories of weapons of mass destruction. Germany strongly welcomes the fact that one of these treaties, the CWC, will shortly enter into force, and hopes that as many countries as possible will have ratified that Convention by that date, especially those countries with declared capacities in this area.

While the CWC contains an elaborate verification regime, the first disarmament agreement to ban an entire category of weapons of mass destruction, the BTWC, lacks such provisions. Even though there has been progress in the Ad Hoc Group of member States on verification measures, there is a clear need to speed up the negotiations. In this context, we welcome the decision adopted by the Ad Hoc Group in September 1996 to allocate more time to the BTWC, as well as the relevant part of the Final Document of the Fourth Review Conference encouraging the Ad Hoc Group to review its method of work and to move to a negotiating format. Germany would like to see the negotiations on a verification protocol completed by mid-1998.

The expansion of the membership of the Conference on Disarmament remains a pending question. While we welcome the decision adopted by the CD in June last year to expand its membership by 23 States, we believe that the other States that have applied for membership can also make valuable contributions to our work. The German position has consistently been that all States wishing to participate in the CD as full members should have the right to do so. We support, therefore, the appointment of a Special Coordinator entrusted with the task of solving the issue of further CD expansion in a timely manner. In this context, I would like to recall the overwhelming support the United Nations resolution on CD enlargement received last year.

The growing number of States wishing to participate in the work of this Conference testifies to the great importance attached to our work by the international community. It is up to us to respond to these high expectations by reaching early agreement on a programme of work that reflects the aspirations and preoccupations of the countries and of the peoples of our planet. This is a difficult task, but we must and we can succeed in this task.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the German Ambassador for his statement, and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Egypt, Ambassador Zahran.

Mr. ZAHRAN (Egypt) (translated from Arabic): Mr. President, allow me at the outset to express to you the congratulations of the Egyptian delegation on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament and our support for the consultations that you are conducting, in an active and competent manner, on the agenda of the Conference even though your country, the Republic of Korea, only joined the Conference on Disarmament a few months ago. I would also like to express my delegation's sincere gratitude to your predecessor, Ambassador Ludwik Dembinski of Poland, who guided the work of the Conference admirably throughout the final part of our 1996 session, and for the consultations he conducted during the inter-sessional period.

I wish to take this opportunity to welcome our new colleagues who have recently joined us at the Conference on Disarmament, namely Ambassador Mohamed Salah Dembri of Algeria, Ambassador John Campbell of Australia, Ambassador Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury of Bangladesh, Ambassador André Mernier of Belgium and Ambassador Bold of Mongolia. I look forward to cooperating closely with all of them in the future.

I would also like to express appreciation for the efforts and the constructive proposals that have been made by Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, the Secretary-General of the Conference and the Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, in order to facilitate the initial work of the Conference on Disarmament. I would also like to thank Mr. Abdelkader Bensmail and the members of the secretariat for all the efforts they are making to assist the Conference in its work.

I have asked for the floor today to make a few observations about the work of the 1997 session of the Conference on Disarmament. I would like to begin with an issue of the utmost importance to the non-nuclear-weapon States including Egypt, namely the question of nuclear disarmament. However, before doing so, I would like to recall that the year 1996 witnessed two very important events in the field of non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament. The first was the signing at Cairo of the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty as a testimony to the developing countries' commitment to the cause of nuclear disarmament worldwide and also as a positive and encouraging step which should be followed soon by the negotiation of the establishment of another zone in the Middle East in conformity with the relevant United Nations General Assembly resolutions and as a step towards the implementation of President Mubarak's proposal concerning the establishment of a zone free from all weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. These steps should promote the achievement of a comprehensive and lasting peace in the region. In this respect, we welcome the agreement recently reached between Israel and the Palestinian Authority on the redeployment of Israeli forces in Hebron as a new phase in the implementation of the Madrid peace process and the Oslo Agreement.

The second event was the adoption of the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty by the General Assembly of the United Nations as a step, limited as it may be, towards nuclear disarmament. The importance of these two events cannot be overlooked and the message that they carry at the regional and international levels should motivate the international community to pursue the objective of nuclear disarmament and should give further impetus to the efforts aimed at achieving the universality of all international instruments relating to disarmament.

The issue of nuclear disarmment has been on the disarmament agenda for several decades. The international community has already dealt with biological and chemical weapons, which are now banned under the Biological Weapons Convention, which unfortunately lacks a verification regime, and the Chemical Weapons Convention, which will enter into force soon, unfortunately without the ratification of the countries which have the greatest stockpiles of these weapons. However, the most serious exception remains that of nuclear weapons, which are unquestionably the most devastating and destructive of all weapons. Article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty called for negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament. That was in 1968, and this objective has not yet been achieved. The 1995 Non-Proliferation Treaty Review and Extension Conference agreed to extend that Treaty indefinitely, but without being able to proceed to a review of the implementation of article VI nor to agree on a binding time schedule for the elimination of nuclear weapons. We recongize that two nuclear-weapon States, namely the United States of America and the Russian Federation, have indeed made important bilateral achievements in this field, but we cannot deny that the nuclear-weapon States have yet to commit themselves to a clear time schedule for nuclear disarmament in order to fulfil their commitment to this so-called ultimate objective of nuclear disarmament referred to in article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

The declarations, action plans, final documents, resolutions and recommendations calling for nuclear disarmament which have been adopted at the United Nations and other international forums, including the Non-Aligned Movement, could fill volumes However, notwithstanding the will of the majority of members of the international community, nuclear disarmament is progressing at a very slow pace without a clear legally binding commitment to a specific time-frame for the achievement of complete nuclear diarmament. Such a situation might give the impression that those countries possessing nuclear weapons still believe that these weapons have a role to play in international relations. Experts in international law view this situation as a threat to international peace and security and a violation of fundamental human rights, particularly the right to life of present and future generations.

The immense destructive power of nuclear weapons was clearly behind the warning message highlighted in the report of the Canberra Commission of August 1996. Its central message was that the doctrine of nuclear deterrence was militarily redundant and dangerous. Furthermore, the report stated, and I quote:

(continued in English)

> "A central reality is that nuclear weapons diminish the security of all States. Indeed, States which possess them become themselves targets of nuclear weapons. The opportunity now exists, perhaps without precedent or recurrence, to make a new and clear choice to enable the world to conduct its affairs without nuclear weapons." "A nuclear-weapon-free world can be secured and maintained through political commitment, and anchored in an enduring and binding legal framework."

(continued in Arabic)

Is it true that there are a number of forums which address nuclear issues, in particular the Conference on Disarmament, which is the sole negotiating forum on disarmament questions, and the General Assembly of the United Nations. However, these issues are not being approached in a comprehensive and conclusive manner and, consequently, the security assurances for the non-nuclear-weapon States provided, jointly and separately, by the nuclear-weapon States, which were reflected in Security Council resolution 984 (1995) still fall short of our expectations since they are conditional, non-comprehensive and not legally binding and have not been negotiated multilaterally. Therefore, the decision on "Principles and objectives" adopted by the Non-Proliferation Treaty Review and Extension Conference in May 1995 should be implemented by beginning serious negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a multilateral and legally binding instrument to provide non-nuclear-weapon States with comprehensive security assurances as soon as possible. Furthermore, in this connection I would like to refer to General Assembly resolution 51/43 which recommended that the Conference on Disarmament should actively continue intensive negotiations with a view to reaching early agreement and concluding effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

The issue of a ban on the production of fissile materials is another case in point. We believe that a ban on the production of fissile materials, should not disregard the past production of those materials, which is commonly referred to as stockpiles, because that would be only a limited measure constituting a partial solution to non-proliferation and could not be considered as a further step towards nuclear disarmament. On this basis therefore, and in conformity with the terms of reference established by Ambassador Shannon the Special Coordinator on this matter, we could begin to negotiate a convention on the prohibition of the production of fissile materials in a committee on nuclear disarmament which the Group of 21 has requested to be established in the CD, because we are considering this question as one of the measures forming part of the nuclear disarmament programme contained in the "Principles and objectives" that were adopted by the NPT Review Conference.

I do not wish to enumerate yet again the very numerous instances in which calls for nuclear disarmament have been made by the international community, I do, however, wish to make reference to General Assembly resolution 51/45 O, which called upon the Conference on Disarmament to establish, on a priority basis, an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament to start negotiations early in 1997 on a phased programme of nuclear disarmament with a view to the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons within a time-bound framework through a nuclear weapons convention.

In this context I would like to refer to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice issued on 8 July 1996 which unanimously recognized that there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control. Resolution 51/45 M adopted by the General Assembly called upon all States to fulfil that obligation immediately by commencing multilateral negotiations in 1997 leading to an early conclusion of a nuclear weapons convention. This should be reflected within the context of the programme of work of the Conference on Disarmament as the sole multilateral negotiating forum dealing with questions of disarmament. In addition, it is worth noting that the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights adopted resolution 1996/14 on 23 August 1996 and contained in document CD/1433 which stipulates in its operative paragraphs the following:

(continued in English)

> "[The Sub-Commission] affirms that weapons of mass destruction and in particular nuclear weapons should have no role to play in international relations and thus should be eliminated;
>
> "Recommends that the relevant international forums, in particular the Conference on Disarmament should immediately start negotiations on nuclear disarmament to reduce nuclear weapons globally within a phased programme, with the ultimate goal of eliminating those weapons, thus contributing to the enhancement of international peace and security and the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms and above all the right to life."

(continued in Arabic)

The programme of action for the elimination of nuclear weapons which Egypt submitted to the Conference on Disarmament on 8 August 1996 on behalf of 28 delegations which are members of the Group of 21 in the Conference on Disarmament (CD/1419) constitutes an additional contribution that will help to start negotiations in the ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament that we requested to be established by the Conference on Disarmament. This programme of action recognizes that there is a requirement for active multilateral efforts to identify, negotiate and implement specific step-by-step measures for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons at both the regional and international levels. This programme contains concrete measures to be carried out by the ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament in three phases, the last of which takes us to the year 2020. The list of measures proposed is not exhaustive but it is understood that, in any programme for nuclear disarmament, all measures to be taken are inextricably bound to one another.

Since this statement concentrates on nuclear issues, to which the highest priority must be accorded, I do not wish to repeat extensively our position on the non-nuclear issues to be included on our provisional agenda. Let me only state that we continue to attach great importance to issues such as the prevention of an arms race in outer space because we are of the opinion that any military activities in this sphere should be categorically banned. In this connection, I would like to refer to resolution 51/44 introduced by Egypt and adopted by the General Assembly and which called upon all States, in particular those with major space capabilities, to contribute actively to the objective of the peaceful use of outer space and of the prevention of an arms race in outer space and to refrain from any actions contrary to that objective. The resolution also requested the Conference on Disarmament to re-establish the Ad Hoc Committee on Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space with a negotiating mandate at the beginning of its 1997 session with a view to conducting negotiations for the conclusion of an agreement to prevent an arms race in outer space in all its aspects.

We turn now to the issue of transparency in armaments, which must be dealt with comprehensively in such a way as to cover all kinds of armaments, be they conventional arms or weapons of mass destruction. In that case transparency would serve as an early warning mechanism in the event of the accumulation of all kinds of arms in any country, thus threatening international peace and security. Moreover, Egypt stressed the need for certain basic requirements to be fulfilled if the United Nations Register is to become a truly significant confidence-building measure and thereby contribute to enhancing security and stability. These requirements are: confidence-building measures have to be universal, comprehensive and non-discriminatory; they must ensure equal rights and obligations for all States; they must address the legitimate security concerns of all States. In this respect we should retain on the agenda of the 1997 session two important items which were included in previous CD agendas, namely, new types of weapons of mass destruction, making reference here to radiological weapons according to United Nations General Assembly resolution 51/37, and the comprehensive programme of disarmament.

Mr. President, those are some comments on the proposal that you yourself have submitted for the provisional agenda of the Conference on Disarmament.

Turning now to the proposed prohibition of anti-personnel landmines, I would like to stress the fact that Egypt is among the countries that have suffered most from landmines. About 23 million landmines were planted in our soil by foreign Powers during the Second World War and regional conflicts. In addition to the citizens who are being being killed and maimed in Egypt every year as a result of those mines, the existing minefields, especially in the area of the Western Desert, continue to hamper the economic and human development efforts in this vast area of our country. Hence the elimination and clearance of those mines is a matter of high priority to Egypt and those foreign Powers which planted them should bear the full cost of their

(Mr. Zahran, Egypt)

clearance. Egypt is aware of the magnitude and severity of the problems related to the proliferation of anti-personnel landmines, which is above all a humanitarian issue given the suffering they inflict on civilian populations, the heavy financial burden and the limited nature of the technology used in the detection and deactivation of these mines. However, we believe that measures aimed at the prohibition of landmines should be accompanied by serious and concrete steps geared, towards mine clearance from affected countries, in particular those countries which are unable to achieve this objective on their own. This could be done by meeting the technical and financial requirements for the achievement of that objective. In this connection, useful reference might be made to the final declaration of the CCW Review Conference held in Geneva in 1996 which contained a paragraph on the role of States involved in the deployment of mines in the process of their clearance, and I quote:

(continued in English)

> "Recognizing the important role that the international community, particularly States involved in the deployment of mines, can play in assisting in mine clearance in affected countries through the provision of necessary maps and information and appropriate technical and material assistance to remove or otherwise render ineffective existing minefields, mines and booby traps ...".

(continued in Arabic)

Moreover, we believe that, in our efforts to limit the proliferation of landmines, we should take into consideration the national security concerns of States and their legitimate right of self-defence enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, particularly in the case of States with long borders passing through uninhabited areas which are also the areas in which illicit smuggling of drugs and weapons takes place with a view to undermining national stability and security and encouraging terrorist and criminal activities across the borders.

The question arises as to who should bear the cost of finding an alternative to the mines that have been planted to defend borders, especially in developing countries. This question must be addressed frankly and fairly by the proponents of the proposal banning anti-personnel landmines before we negotiate a treaty. At all events, this issue should not overshadow the question of nuclear disarmament to which we and the international community attach top priority in conformity with the outcome of the special General Assembly session on disarmament, SSOD-I, and other relevant resolutions.

In conclusion, I would like to stress the importance of promoting and strengthening the competence of the United Nation in the field of disarmament. This joint objective requires coordination between the work of the Conference on Disarmament, the First Committee and the Disarmament Commission with a view to supplementing international efforts to achieve general and complete disarmament. In the light of past experience, we call upon all States to cooperate in good faith in the implementation of all the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly concerning the work of the Conference on Disarmament in order to ensure respect for international law and democratic relations.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador Zahran for his statement and kind remarks addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Bangladesh, Ambassador Chowdhury.

Mr. CHOWDHURY (Bangladesh): The Bangladesh delegation felicitates you, Sir, upon the assumption of the presidency. That you undertake these onerous responsibilities so soon after the Republic of Korea's joining the CD reflects your own and your country's commitments to our goals. This warrants praise. Bangladesh, too, is new in the CD. We are not, however, new in our dedication to its purposes. We hope our contribution would attest to it. I thank all who have welcomed me, and other newcomers, so warmly today. We appear to have come at an opportune moment just as the Conference is looking at the organization of its work for the year ahead.

In some ways the CD, as our French colleague has said, is at a crossroads. The CTBT is not without flaws, but it is a task largely accomplished. We now need to move forward. We must decide which way, and how. Both you, Sir, and Secretary-General Petrovsky have displayed remarkable initiative. You have endeavoured through your non-papers to point to the possible directions. You have sought to identify issues and priorities of delegations and groups. You have tried to balance several ideas. Doubtless, these will be discussed and debated. Nevertheless, for your attempts, we are in your debt. We would like you to know that no well-intentioned effort is ever wasted. We also welcome the steps several States have taken, as we have heard today, to buttress the mores of an arms-free or, at least, a less dangerous world.

The CD's abiding link with the Decalogue is beyond dispute. The Decalogue is not just its frame of reference, but also the definer of its content. Yet we know that change is one of nature's most fundamental laws. The world is in constant flux. One never steps into the same River Rhone twice. All things will evolve and perhaps alter, as will, indeed, the Decalogue. But perceptible changes must be preceded by intense consultations. These must be effected on the basis of agreement. New items for consideration should only follow such understanding, and there must be consistency with the Decalogue.

That being said, it is our view that the Conference needs a clear work programme. It should set the priorities for 1997 and the modalities for negotiating thereon. Ours is the sole negotiating forum on disarmament. The luxury of deliberations and items, however intricately politically balanced, is sadly not for us to indulge in. Our work programmes must entail the establishment of ad hoc groups with negotiating mandates. One cannot take up all issues at once. Only one or two can be identified for such focus. Others can be left for plenary deliberations in preparation for future negotiations. We believe that the idea that a single ad hoc committee can take up more than one issue within the spectrum of nuclear disarmament merits examination.

Nuclear disarmament is an unambiguous priority for the Group of 21. It has repeatedly called for the establishment of an ad hoc group with a negotiating mandate for this purpose. The Ambassador of Egypt referred to the 28 CD members last year tabling a phased programme for the elimination of nuclear weapons. Bangladesh was party to that event. General and complete disarmament is in our Constitution. It is in our values. It is in our ethos. Our commitment to this aspiration, if not goal, is unflinching. That was the reason behind our joining the formalization of the indefinite expansion of the NPT. That was what inspired our signing of the CTBT despite its shortcomings and the least developed countries' concerns regarding financial obligations. The extension of the NPT and the CTBT were events that now lead to the logical goal, that is, the commencement of negotiations for the elimination of all nuclear weapons from the face of the Earth.

I must add, however, that your list contains items Bangladesh has no hesitation to discuss. The cutting off of fissile material is one such item. But this could be within the broad context of nuclear disarmament as envisaged in the phased programme proposed by the 28 members. However, my delegation does not fight shy of other issues. Ours is a peaceful country with most peaceful intentions. We shall do all that is possible to protect ourselves, to preserve peace in our region, and to bring stability in the world. We know for certain that there is no delegation with wishes to the contrary. But the manner in which we go about our business must be agreed upon, and this should conform to established priorities.

Nuclear disarmament is not an idea that is new. The time to address it with utmost seriousness has surely come. We must do it, all of us, together. There is a saying in our part of the world: "There is not much point in a flock of sheep passing resolutions in favour of vegetarianism if the leopards remain of a different opinion." We are aware that your task is not an easy one. Nor is ours. Yet Gordian knots have been cut before. We are confident that our endeavours will lead to fruition. My delegation will cooperate in every possible way.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Ambassador of Bangladesh for his statement and kind words. Now I give the floor to the representative of Belgium, Mr. Peeters.

Mr. PEETERS (Belgium) (translated from French): Mr. President, since my delegation is speaking at this session for the first time, allow me first of all to congratulate you on taking up the post of President of the Conference on Disarmament. I wish you every success in discharging your functions and, from the very start of our work, wish to assure you of the full and complete support of the Belgian delegation.

I am taking the floor briefly before the Conference today in order to pass on a few ideas concerning anti-personnel mines, since some delegations have already addressed this issue. At the outset of this session my delegation wishes to make its contribution in order to dispel any ambiguity about this important matter. The recent adoption of resolution 51/45 S at the last United Nations General Assembly testifies to the firm commitment of the international community to act and showed that a broad consensus has now emerged in favour of a comprehensive ban on anti-personnel mines.

The major issue of concern to us all today is how can we bring about this ban at an early date. Since the outset Belgium has played an active part in the process initiated in Ottawa. This is why Belgium has put itself forward as a candidate to organize the follow-up conference in Brussels in June 1997. But as I have just said, certain countries have recently expressed the wish that the preparation of this treaty should be entrusted to the Conference on Disarmament in order to involve a maximum number of States.

Belgium wishes to emphasize that in its view the two methods of work are perfectly compatible, as long as they are mutually supportive and complementary, or, in other words, as long as each approach is a constructive approach. Both forums have their own advantages. It is true that the Conference on Disarmament has its merits and it has a universal calling. Belgium fully recognizes that the Conference on Disarmament may be brought in in the future, to devise a verification system, for instance. However, we must at all costs avoid a situation in which the work through one process, whatever it may be, slows down or hampers efforts that are being pursued elsewhere. This would make the final goal more remote. And even if each process has its own way of dealing with the issue, our objective remains the same: a comprehensive and universal ban on anti-personnel mines. Hence the importance for my country of the process started in Ottawa, whose objective remains unchanged: secure at an early date a treaty banning anti-personnel mines.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Belgium for his statement and kind words. I think that this concludes my list of speakers for today. Unless there are any delegations wishing to take the floor, I suggest that we move on to the next item.

As I informed you at the beginning of this meeting, I shall now take up for decision the requests for participation as observers in our work during 1997 received from Nepal and Armenia. These requests are contained in document CD/WP.480, which is before you. May I take it that the Conference agrees to these requests?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: As you are aware, intensive consultations are still under way with a view to developing a consensus on the agenda and organization of work of the Conference for its current session. I have put forward a proposal on the annual agenda which I believe could form a basis for our consideration in this regard. The statements made in the plenary on Tuesday 21 January and today also provided us with valuable guidance which will hopefully contribute to the consensus-building process on the agenda and programme of work. It is my intention to further intensify our consultations, on a different dimension, in order to bring about agreement on the agenda, organization of the work and of the modalities of negotiations as soon as possible so that we may embark on our substantive work. For this purpose, I intend, with your concurrence, to hold a series of informal plenaries, the first of which will be held next Tuesday, 28 January at 10 a.m. in this room.

Ambassador Tarmidzi of Indonesia has the floor.

Mr. TARMIDZI (Indonesia): Since this is the first time that I take the floor in the plenary under your presidency, I would like to avail myself of this opportunity to extend congratulations on your assumption. Of course, a more proper address will be done at an appropriate time. I am asking for the floor to convey the preference of the Group of 21, of which Indonesia is at present the Coordinator, that the informal plenary be held on Thursday, rather than on Tuesday, for the simple and practical reason that the weekly consultations amongst the Group are on Wednesday.

Mr. RAMAKER (Netherlands): Thank you very much for giving me the floor, and I also, on my part, congratulate you with your function as President of the Conference on Disarmament. Being President of this Conference in the month that it starts its work is not an easy task, as was also mentioned this morning, and let me just tell you that my delegation fully supports you in your efforts.

You mentioned in your remarks just now the programme of bilateral consultations you are engaged in, and we, I think, as I also made clear on behalf of the Western Group, encourage you in pursuing that process. We have urgent tasks before us. We are eager, and I think this goes for all of us, to take up concrete work as soon as possible. I find this one of the encouraging signs coming out of the consultations that are being held on a weekly basis under your guidance at the moment, and I think that is good. We are all united in the desire to take up concrete work as soon as possible.

So I know that I speak on behalf of my Group when I say that we welcome your initiative to start a series of informal plenaries in order to tackle the issues that are before us. I think that is a helpful additional instrument in our efforts to agree on the early commencement of concrete work. I also welcome - and I think this is in the spirit also of my Group, although we would have preferred that we could start today - it is, of course, your prerogative to make another proposal, as you did, for practical reasons, and as I understand it, to give time to delegations, if they wish, and groups to consult. Now, I fully understand the need for delegations to get instructions and also, of course, for groups, if they so wish, to meet. But I just wonder - and, of course, it's only a question - whether it would be possible to consider, given the urgency to start work as soon as possible - actually this part of the session will last something like two and a half months, and we would like to make full use of the time allotted to us - would it be possible if groups - and I think that for my own Group that would be, of course, to be proposed to them as well - would it be possible that groups would meet a little earlier so that, for instance, we could honour your request and have an informal plenary, the first one this coming Tuesday? It is just a suggestion and an appeal, as I said, given the urgency of the task. Of course, the whole mechanism of informal plenaries is also meant to give all delegations the opportunity to give their views on the issues that we have before us and, precisely, it is a useful instrument in addition, as I said to you, bilateral consultations in addition to the weekly consultations. So it is just a suggestion, if you wish, that maybe we could see and try whether we could consider speeding up the process a little bit.

The PRESIDENT: Thank you for your comments and proposals. I now give the floor to the representative of China.

Mr. WANG (China) (translated from Chinese): Mr. President, this is the first time my delegation has taken the floor. We would like to congratulate you warmly on taking up the presidency of the first session of the CD this year. I would also like to reserve an opportunity for my Ambassador to offer you his formal congratulations on your assumption of the presidency. At the same time I would like to stress that my delegation will cooperate fully with you to promote the work of the CD.

Regarding the matter of an informal plenary of the CD, first of all we would like to thank you for your proposal. We will seek instructions as quickly as possible. This would not have been a complicated matter. However, this year we have a new situation. In other words, this arrangement of an informal plenary proposed by you actually cannot follow the same procedure that the CD has followed in the past in its normal work. The CD had its formal organizational arrangement in its normal work in the past. Under those circumstances, the matter of informal arrangements was in fact only a procedural matter and it was not complicated. However, this year the situation is different. On the matter of an informal plenary, I am afraid the format, the topics and the timing of such a plenary should be considered in a comprehensive and integrated manner. Of course this is only the view of the Chinese delegation. Your proposal has its merits and defects and it also constitutes a precedent which will have a bearing on the future work of the CD. Therefore naturally we can understand that certain delegations or certain groups require time to think this over. Proceeding from this standpoint, the Chinese delegation thinks that the proposal by the Indonesian delegation on behalf of the Group of 21 that the informal plenary should be held on Thursday is a reasonable suggestion. The Chinese delegation fully agrees with this suggestion.

Mr. BENJELLOUN-TOUIMI (Morocco) (translated from French): Mr. President, as my delegation, both in the Group of 21 as well as at the last plenary, was one of those which wanted to have informal consultations in order to try and foster progress, I cannot but support you and congratulate you on your proposal. I think that things are much simpler. Your initiative is a very good one and in my view we could have initial consultations, as you suggest, on Tuesday, to see how we are going to proceed. In any case my delegation has no instructions on a number of points, but that will not prevent me from listening to you, listening to other delegations and reporting back to my authorities on the positions expressed on a number of topics and on your paper. I know that we in the G.21 wish to consult on these matters, but I will only be able to embark on consultations with the members of the G.21 once my own delegation has instructions, and I have none as yet. I think that in order to move things forward, we could - and I am not at all contradicting our Coordinator, Ambassador Tarmidzi, when I say that it is simply a question of getting started and giving a hearing to you and others without adopting specific positions - I don't see why we shouldn't do that.

Mr. LEDOGAR (United States of America): It was my understanding that rule 19, suggesting that there should be consensus before there is a particular format agreed upon, referred to meetings on substance. I am frankly rather surprised that on a procedural matter, which is what I understand you have in mind in suggesting informal plenaries, rule 19 would be invoked. What is going to happen if we have group meetings on Wednesday, and at those meetings some members tell their group coordinators that they don't have instructions yet? Then we come back on Thursday and we hear that, well, there's no consensus within a particular group to hold an informal plenary next Thursday, and so on. Instructions on substance are understandable, but to get together to talk about procedure, our agenda, and that that requires prior consensus within a group, I find rather extraordinary. But if it is the case, then I wonder if you could not, instead of convoking informal plenaries, accomplish the same procedural mission by calling for an open-ended bureau meeting.

The PRESIDENT: Thank you very much for your comments. Rule 19 reads: "The work of the Conference shall be conducted in plenary meetings, as well as under any additional arrangements agreed by the Conference, such as informal meetings with or without experts." And then rule 22: "The Conference may hold informal meetings, with or without experts, to consider as appropriate substantive matters, as well as questions concerning its organisation of work". It is my understanding - well, before going further, there is a request from the Ambassador of Indonesia.

Mr. TARMIDZI (Indonesia): Thank you for giving me the floor again and I apologise for that. Although you have explained earlier that the informal meeting should in no way reflect the views of groups, our Group thinks that even though that was the case, I think it would be helpful if, at the informal consultations, the national positions of each individual country, when they're reflected, have already been consulted within the Groups. This, I think, is the intention of the proposal coming from the Group of 21. I know that we are all at your discretion. And I think also that when you mention rule 19 and rule 22, we are not going only to discuss procedural matters, but also substantive matters, and this is what we are concerned about.

Mr. BERDENNIKOV (Russian Federation) (translated from Russian): Mr. President, I too would like to congratulate you first of all on your appointment as President of the Conference and wish you every success including in the matter that we are now discussing, the organization of the work of the Conference.

Mr. President, as I understand it, there are no disagreements among the members of the Conference as to whether or not we should hold informal meetings. I haven't heard anybody object to this form of work. What is at issue here is simply when such meetings should be held, whether on Tuesday or Thursday. I do not consider that this is a fundamental issue. And if a group of delegations, supported by another very important delegation, prefers to hold such a meeting on Thursday, then why can't we, in a spirit of compromise and of course without any prejudice to the urgency of our work and the importance of this work, go along with that and agree that, indeed, there will be an informal meeting of the Conference, but on Thursday. I don't think that such a decision would do any harm to the work of the Conference - on the contrary, we would be taking a step forward, even if only a small one.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Ambassador of the Russian Federation. Well, I thank, once again, various Ambassadors for their comments and I have duly taken note of them. Of course, under the authority of the President, the President can convene at any time an informal consultation of the whole. However, in order to give more weight to and in order to conduct more organized, presumably more productive, discussions, I would suggest that the informal plenary would be better. But convening informal consultations in informal plenary does not mean that I cease to carry on my bilateral and multilateral consultations which I have been carrying out these weeks, let alone the weekly Presidential consultations. On this understanding, I suggest that there is general agreement that the informal plenaries will start on Thursday, 30 January 1997 at 10 a.m., immediately after the plenary of the Conference.

Mr. BENJELLOUN-TOUIMI (Morocco): I have no problem with your suggestion and, of course, it is always nice to be able to consult with colleagues from the same group, but my proposal is rather of another nature. Is it a requirement to have the plenary meeting on Thursday? Why don't we move the plenary meeting to Tuesday and have the informal meeting on Thursday? I really think that if there are many speakers at the plenary, little time will be left to consider the issues of the agenda. Around 12 o'clock I don't think we can seriously start talking about the agenda, which is a very important business. So, although I appreciate what has been said and your ruling, I think this is not the way to conduct our business, because we all know that we suffered from speech fatigue before, and that we have to take that into account.

The PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Ambassador Benjelloun-Touimi. With your understanding I will come back to this particular point you have raised as to whether the CD can skip the plenary on Thursday.

Is there general agreement that informal plenaries will start on Thursday, immediately after the plenary when we will have the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Foreign Minister of Australia as visitors? Is it understood?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: The next plenary meeting will be held on Thursday, 30 January at 10 a.m., to be immediately followed by an informal plenary. As you know, on this occasion, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Kofi Annan, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Australia, the Honourable Alexander Downer, will address the Conference, and I would therefore kindly request all of you to be present at 10 a.m. sharp in view of the heavy schedules of these two distinguished visitors.

The meeting rose at 12.25 p.m.

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.753
30 January 1997

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE SEVEN HUNDRED AND FIFTY-THIRD PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 30 January 1997, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Sun (Republic of Korea)

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 753rd plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

I should like at the outset to extend, on behalf of the Conference and on my own behalf, a warm welcome to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan, who will be our first speaker today. I am sure we are all very grateful to the Secretary-General who, so soon after the assumption of his heavy responsibilities and despite his extremely heavy schedule during his stay in Geneva, has found it possible to address our Conference. His presence among us today is proof of his personal interest in the issues of arms control and disarmament and of the importance he attaches to our forum. I am certain that I speak for all of us when I express my conviction that the presence of Mr. Kofi Annan today will give decisive impetus to our work.

I am also very pleased to cordially welcome the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Australia, the Hon. Alexander Downer, who will also address the Conference today. His visit is a further testimony of his country's continued and sustained commitment to the work of the Conference.

In addition to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Australia, the list of speakers for today includes the representatives of Pakistan, Algeria, Japan, the United Kingdom, Chile, Sri Lanka and the Islamic Republic of Iran. Once we have exhausted the list of speakers, I intend to put forward for decision of the Conference requests from Saudi Arabia, the Philippines, Jordan and Swaziland to participate, as observers, in our work during the year of 1997. With your concurrence, I should like to take a decision on these requests without first considering them at an informal meeting.

Now I invite the Secretary-General of the United Nations, His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan, to make his statement.

Mr. ANNAN (Secretary-General of the United Nations): Distinguished representatives, ladies and gentlemen, perhaps before I start I would want to congratulate you, Mr. President, for your able leadership of this Conference. I am honoured and delighted to be able to address this vital forum, so early in my term as Secretary-General of the United Nations.

The world no longer lives under the shadow of the cold war. But today, the nations and peoples of the world are looking to this Conference to press ahead with the global disarmament agenda. They hope that this Conference can bring the twin threats of weapons of mass destruction and the world's growing stockpile of conventional weapons under control.

They expect this Conference to advance one of the fundamental objectives of the United Nations: the maintenance of international peace and security.

Ten years ago, even the most optimistic supporters of disarmament could not have expected the cold war to end so abruptly. Nor could we have imagined that its end would lead so rapidly to so much positive cooperation at the unilateral, bilateral, regional and global levels.

Today, we have all been jolted out of the established strategic concepts born of the cold war and the constant threat of nuclear confrontation. As Secretary-General, I welcome the positive efforts made to advance international cooperation in the three vital areas of chemical, biological and nuclear weapons.

A variety of successful unilateral measures and mutual agreements on the downsizing of nuclear stockpiles have been put in place.

And the nuclear Powers continue to cooperate in seeking safer ways of dismantling weapons and of handling and storing fissile material.

The Treaties of Bangkok and Pelindaba, and further consolidation of the Treaties of Tlatelolco and Rarotonga, provide an ever stronger foundation for further advances in the field of nuclear non-proliferation. These treaties have enhanced the security of the States which are parties to them.

Within a few months of its approval by the General Assembly in September 1996, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty had already been signed by 140 States. These include all five nuclear-weapon States, and more than two thirds of the membership of the Organization.

We shall soon witness the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention and the inauguration of its implementing organization.

I urge all those States that have not yet ratified the Convention, and in particular declared possessors of chemical weapons, such as the Russian Federation and the United States, to do so before it enters into force. I welcome the commitment of their Governments to achieving that important goal.

The States parties to the Biological Weapons Convention met last year. They agreed to continue seeking ways of reinforcing its international authority through the negotiation of a verification regime. I strongly support these efforts.

All of these developments add up to a new and positive climate in the international security arena.

We know, however, that uncertainties and serious challenges remain. We must do more, all of us, to develop and enhance new international structures, and to redefine the mechanics of international relationships in the post-cold-war era.

A new international security agenda must be agreed, which takes account of our rapidly changing world.

This Conference therefore faces a new and serious challenge. Its mandate makes it the sole international body with responsibility for negotiating agreements on arms regulation and disarmament. That is a heavy responsibility. How can your Conference best discharge it, and help to define a new disarmament agenda for the closing years of this millennium?

Further decisive progress towards nuclear disarmament has become an expectation of the new era. I add my voice to those who have expressed strong support for the urgent need to continue with the process of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The possibility of nuclear accidents, illicit trafficking in nuclear materials and the threat of nuclear terrorism all underline the need to maintain progress in this area.

Nuclear disarmament must remain a priority for the international community. In this respect, your Conference has a unique opportunity to build on the successful work of the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the parties to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. Although the Treaty has not yet achieved universality, it embraces almost the entire membership of the United Nations. Its decisions could, therefore, constitute a broad guideline for further steps in this field.

One such step should be a convention banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. I am aware that this issue poses enormous technical and political difficulties. But I would also remind the Conference that we can never move forward unless we are prepared to start talking.

In my view, the mandate of the ad hoc committee established by the 1995 Conference is inclusive of the positions of all States. I urge the Conference to find a way to build on this positive start and to begin negotiations as soon as possible.

The implementation of the international community's commitment to the irreversible process of nuclear disarmament represents one of the overarching challenges of our time. The specific character of your Conference - a forum of high standing and broad representation - makes it eminently qualified to lend its support to efforts aimed at furthering this noble objective. I hope that the Conference will be able to avoid a situation which could jeopardize this shared goal.

In addition, your Conference has long been concerned over the related issue of security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. This issue could be usefully re-examined to determine how such assurances can be strengthened further.

The traditional concerns of this Conference have been weapons of mass destruction.

But increases in local and regional conflicts since the end of the cold war have made the issue of conventional weapons an urgent and important one. These are the weapons which are actually killing combatants and civilians in their tens of thousands every year. We know just how helpless the international community can be when massive amounts of conventional arms are allowed to accumulate, legally or illegally, within States.

Of course, weapons in themselves do not cause war. But an excess of arms breeds the suspicion and mistrust that can heighten tensions and lead to violent conflict.

Our challenge today is to build on our hope and optimism at the end of the cold war, and not allow real progress in international security to be undermined by new conventional arms races at the regional and subregional levels.

On a personal level, I owe a huge debt of gratitude to the courage and devotion of United Nations peace-keepers and other international personnel.

They face daily the threat posed by millions of indiscriminately laid anti-personnel landmines. These weapons have become weapons of terror.

That is why I urge all States to ensure that amended Protocol II of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons enters into force as soon as possible and to comply fully with its provisions. I welcome the growing movement in favour of national measures to curb the transfer and use of these weapons and the commitment of more and more States to negotiate an effective legally binding total ban on them.

While it is for the international community to decide the best venue for the negotiating process, it would seem logical for the Conference on Disarmament to play a role.

The security challenges facing the international community can appear daunting. But they are far from being insurmountable. There are solid grounds for optimism. The Conference has the vision and the tools needed for success. An increased membership gives greater scope for new ideas, suggestions and proposals. Any further expansion of membership must ensure that the effectiveness of the Conference is preserved, while maintaining its important geographical and political balance.

One of the strongest instruments the Conference has at its disposal is a consensus approach to problem-solving. Without consensus, the solid foundations needed for further disarmament agreements and concerted international action cannot be built.

Consensus protects the interests of each State, big or small, and ensures that negotiated treaties and conventions command the widest possible support.

The Conference has a proud record of endeavour and of lasting achievement.

In short, there is no institution on Earth better qualified than your Conference to translate the world's constant yearning for peace into practical, negotiated measures for enhancing international understanding and the security of all nations.

I pledge my full cooperation, and that of the United Nations, for your essential work. I wish you all a productive and successful session in 1997.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Secretary-General for his statement, which, I am sure, constitutes a source of inspiration for all of us. I shall now suggest to suspend the plenary meeting for five minutes so that the Secretary-General of the Conference and myself may escort the Secretary-General from the room.

The meeting was suspended at 10.25 a.m. and resumed at 10.30 a.m.

The PRESIDENT: The plenary meeting is resumed. I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Australia, the Hon. Alexander Downer.

Mr. DOWNER (Australia): I am very pleased to have this opportunity to address the Conference on Disarmament, the more so under the distinguished chairmanship of Australia's regional neighbour and good friend, the Republic of Korea.

Through turbulent times and times of peace, Australia has endeavoured in this hall to make a practical and realistic contribution to building a better and a safer world.

We shall continue that endeavour in the current and future sessions of the Conference. You and your successors may count on the full and active cooperation of the Australian delegation in ensuring that, in 1997, the Conference acquits fully the expectations of the international community.

My first duty this morning is to lay before you the report of the Canberra Commission on the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons.

Of the myriad arms control challenges we face today, the question of how best to tackle the continued existence of large and sophisticated nuclear arsenals has long been the most vexed.

The Canberra Commission was a body of independent experts and eminent persons commissioned by the Australian Government to address the fundamental questions of whether a nuclear-weapon-free world is feasible and, if so, the measures which could be taken to attain that objective.

I should like to record here my gratitude to the members of the Commission for the extreme seriousness, dedication and creativity which they brought to bear on their task. The Commission's report comes at a crucial point in the international community's consideration of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

Having at last met the challenge of concluding the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty, the international community must now push on with further practical and realistic measures on nuclear arms control and disarmament.

A window of opportunity is open before us. If we do not take that opportunity, the window could close, and future generations will not forgive us for this.

It is a complicated task. To succeed, the international community must develop new thinking - creative and imaginative thinking. But we cannot afford to lose ourselves in rhetoric or unproductive idealism. The international community needs to focus on developing ideas which are practical, constructive and realistic and which actually take us closer, step by step, to the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons.

I offer the report and recommendations of the Canberra Commission as just such a contribution to international thinking and discussion on nuclear disarmament.

Most importantly, the report recommends a political commitment by the nuclear-weapon States to the elimination of nuclear weapons. This is the first and central requirement.

The report then sets out six "immediate steps": taking nuclear forces off alert; removal of warheads from delivery vehicles; ending the deployment of non-strategic nuclear weapons; ending nuclear testing; initiating negotiations to reduce further United States and Russian nuclear arsenals; and an agreement amongst the nuclear-weapon States on reciprocal no-first-use undertakings, and of a non-use undertaking by them in relation to the non-nuclear-weapons States.

The Commission also recommends three "reinforcing steps": action to prevent further horizontal proliferation; developing verification arrangements for a nuclear-weapon-free world; and the cessation of the production of fissile material for nuclear explosive purposes.

The Commission placed a particular emphasis on the importance of effective verification in the achievement and maintenance of a nuclear-weapon-free world.

The nuclear disarmament debate is of utmost significance for the peoples of the world.

Australia urges careful consideration of the report of the Canberra Commission by all Governments. I sincerely hope and believe that the report will make a weighty contribution to future discussion of nuclear arms control and disarmament by the international community.

I have said that the international community has expectations of this organization. They are, I believe, that it should respond fully to the opportunities created by the end of the cold war to deliver arms control treaties and agreements which make a practical, realistic contribution to an improved climate of international security.

I congratulate the CD for having risen to this challenge.

In the few short years since the end of the cold war, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty have been hammered out in these halls.

In outlawing for the first time an entire category of weapons of mass destruction and in ridding the planet of the spectre of nuclear testing, the CD has delivered to humanity - now and future generations - an incalculable good.

I am proud and grateful that my country working with members of this Conference, was able to contribute to both these achievements.

But you are now at a crossroads, ladies and gentlemen.

In a way, your recent successes make the way ahead more difficult and uncertain. It is certainly not an Alexandrian dilemma you face - that is, having no more worlds to conquer - but rather a choice as to how and where to deploy your energies and expertise now that a number of clear and long-held goals have been achieved, and the future arms control landscape looks - as a consequence - diffuse and unfamiliar.

It will be important that the Conference not relapse into the sterile ideological debate of the cold war years - years which were lean for this and other organizations built on and dedicated to international cooperation. You should bear in mind that the distinctive characteristic of this organization is its ability and mandate to negotiate arms control agreements. Naturally, you need to retain a sense of the broader strategic and political debate taking place in other forums on disarmament and non-proliferation issues, but your agenda should be framed in terms of clear, achievable and practical outcomes.

Do not dissipate your energies by trying to tackle too many tasks at once, particularly if they are being tackled elsewhere. Reform, modernize and streamline your agenda, jettisoning those elements which have become anachronistic and postponing to a more propitious time those which may be too ambitious in current circumstances. By all means, strike bargains, seek trade-offs and manoeuvre in other ways to protect and advance your national, regional or group interests, but avoid "hostage-taking" and stalemate.

Focus on the arms control negotiations which are of most pressing concern to the international community.

In 1997, I believe these to be: a treaty banning the production of fissile material for weapons purposes - a so-called "cut-off" convention - and a treaty which bans anti-personnel landmines totally.

For many years, proposals to negotiate a treaty to prohibit the production of fissile material for use in nuclear-weapons - the "cut-off convention" - have been on the international nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament agenda.

Australia has long supported a cut-off convention and co-sponsored the annual resolution on this issue at the United Nations General Assembly up to and including the 1993 resolution which received consensus support. However, in spite of this consensus endorsement, which supported the establishment of an Ad Hoc Committee in the CD, there has, as you know, been little progress.

It may until now have been possible to argue that other negotiations, such as the indefinite extension of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, and the conclusion of the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty, needed to receive higher priority in the work programmes of international negotiating forums.

That time has now passed and Australia believes that the beginning of negotiations on a cut-off convention must be addressed urgently in your 1997 programme.

The wishes of the international community in this respect are clear.

In addition to the United Nations General Assembly resolutions to which I have referred, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review and Extension Conference in May 1995 called unanimously for "the immediate commencement and early conclusion of negotiations on a non-discriminatory and universally applicable convention banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices ...".

While the exact shape and scope of the cut-off convention remain to be determined, an ad hoc committee of this Conference should be formed without further delay with a negotiating mandate based on the United Nations General Assembly forty-eighth session resolution.

The principal objective would be to cap the world's stockpile of fissile material and to provide a guarantee against the recommencement of the nuclear arms race. It would be an obvious and important complement to the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty in this respect.

A cut-off treaty would serve the security interests of all members of the international community - nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States, Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty parties and non-NPT parties.

For the nuclear-weapon States, membership of a cut-off convention would confirm the unilateral commitments already made by four of these States to cease producing weapons-grade fissile material, and codify this commitment into a general ban on such production. It would also place under safeguards a number of plants which have been excluded under the terms of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

For the so-called "threshold States", it would mean ceasing any production of fissile material suitable for use in nuclear weapons, and opening up their nuclear facilities to international verification.

For the majority of countries which, like Australia, are non-nuclear-weapon States party to the NPT, a cut-off convention would not require any additional safeguards or verification measures. But it would provide an additional guarantee as well as a reassurance that the world is headed in the direction of the complete elimination of nuclear weapons.

Indeed, the report of the Canberra Commission on the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons identified a cut-off convention as an important reinforcing step along this road which should be undertaken as a matter of urgency.

Anti-personnel landmines are the great scourge of our day - and, sadly, will remain so for generations to come.

You will all be familiar with the grisly statistics - the almost unimaginable number of these weapons sown haphazardly and unmarked in so many countries; the lives that have been lost or blighted, and that continue to be lost and blighted as we sit here; the tracts of farmland rendered useless or deadly. This problem is not just a theoretical or doctrinal concern but a lethal reality for many people across the globe - most poignantly for the estimated 10,000 people who will be killed and 20,000 who will be wounded by anti-personnel landmines in the coming year.

These weapons have been so widely misused in a way they were never intended to be that my country, like so many others, believes that the sane, humane course is to ban them completely.

Like many other countries, Australia has suspended the operational use of anti-personnel landmines by its armed forces. We have done this not because the Australian Defence Force is in any way responsible for the international landmines crisis, but as a moral gesture intended to hasten the end of the carnage.

Australia is committed to supporting practical measures to tackle the humanitarian disaster caused by landmines. That is why the Australian Government, shortly after coming into office in March 1996, announced a de-mining programme for Cambodia and Laos worth $12 million over three years. This comes on top of earlier contributions totalling $8.5 million, in addition to the deployment of our army engineers to de-mining programmes in Afghanistan, Mozambique, Angola and Cambodia.

I am happy to be able to announce to you today that Australia will be contributing a further $4 million over the next three years to mine clearance and rehabilitation work in Cambodia and Mozambique.

Australia is also interested in working with other countries to improve de-mining technology, in order to increase the rate and scale of the de-mining process. We have developed what we believe to be breakthrough technology which has the potential to make mine detection faster and more reliable in countries like Cambodia with highly mineralized soils. We will be drawing this development to the attention of delegates to the Tokyo Conference on Anti-Personnel Landmines in March of this year.

What is needed now is an instrument which will formalize the many national unilateral gestures into a legally binding international regime which effectively outlaws anti-personnel landmines as a weapon of war and civilian terror.

Only the Conference on Disarmament, I believe, has the expertise, the experience and the standing to deliver such an instrument.

In many ways, this will be a novel challenge for you. Anti-personnel landmines are a classic defensive weapon - the security of no State is threatened by another's possession or deployment of them. The inspiration for your endeavours will be primarily humanitarian - very much related to the security of the individual.

The elaborate and intrusive compliance and verification mechanisms you have crafted in the case of chemical weapons and nuclear testing may well not be appropriate to an anti-personnel landmines treaty.

But such a treaty will be an arms control instrument. It must be effective, and have force and credibility. It must enjoy the imprimatur and the confidence of the international community. It must, in short, be a product of the Conference on Disarmament.

I know that some in this hall and beyond have reservations about such an enterprise on principle - principles related to legitimate self-defence needs or particular national security situations. I sympathize with these concerns.

Australia's own decision to suspend the use of anti-personnel landmines and to support the negotiation of a global ban as soon as possible was not taken without considerable soul-searching given that the defence challenge for Australia is to be able to protect a vast continent with a small professional armed force.

I urge the hesitant among you not to withhold consent to the CD's undertaking this vital work, but rather to explore and negotiate with an open mind - as happens with any arms control negotiation - how your particular national security interests may be accommodated within the framework of the international instrument the world needs.

I also know that some - inspired by humanitarian concerns with which Australia fully sympathizes - want to draw up a ban on anti-personnel landmines in a more limited ad hoc forum outside the Conference on Disarmament because, quite simply, they do not believe this Conference can deliver a treaty fast enough to meet the urgency of the humanitarian crisis we are facing.

I say to them - work on possible elements of a draft treaty by all means, assist and complement the CD in its endeavours, but be wary of the risk of producing a permanent partial solution to the global landmines crisis. I say to you, distinguished members of the Conference on Disarmament: prove them wrong.

I do not want to complete my remarks today without mentioning two other important disarmament issues.

We should all take immense satisfaction that the Chemical Weapons Convention, a landmark treaty negotiated in this forum, will enter into force on 29 April this year. The value of this achievement will be enhanced by the widest possible membership at entry into force, and I would urge those countries which have not yet ratified to do so in order to become original States parties.

I should also draw attention to the importance of the work currently under way in the Ad Hoc Group to strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention. The fact that breaches of this treaty have come to light in recent years underlines the urgent need to develop effective verification provisions for this Convention.

In doing so, however, we should be wary of achieving a result for its own sake - we must ensure that the machinery developed will be effective in monitoring compliance.

I realise I have been rather direct in my comments today, but I have done so as a friend of this institution and one who wants to see it continue productively for the benefit of all mankind. I see dangers for this institution if it spends 1997 in debate about its agenda and direction rather than maintaining the momentum of arms control negotiations.

I have commended to you a report - the report of the Canberra Commission - which I hope will stimulate international thinking and discussion on nuclear disarmament.

I have urged you to begin work on a cut-off convention, which that report sees as an important reinforcing step on the road to the complete elimination of nuclear weapons.

I have proposed a balancing negotiation - on anti-personnel landmines - which would address an urgent need in the area of conventional weapons.

I believe this package, or something like it, holds the key to the continuing credibility and relevance of this institution to the security needs of the international community.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Hon. Alexander Downer, the Foreign Minister of Australia, for his statement and the kind words he addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Pakistan, Ambassador Munir Akram.

Mr. AKRAM (Pakistan): Mr. President, please accept felicitations of the Pakistan delegation and my personal best wishes on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference. This is an important and difficult juncture in the work of the Conference on Disarmament. We have no doubt that you will enable the CD to overcome these difficulties and realise its full potential to promote global disarmament.

I also wish to congratulate your distinguished predecessor, Ambassador Dembinski of Poland, for his leadership and sagacity during the final turbulent days of our 1996 session and its dramatic aftermath.

The personal participation in the CD of the new Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Kofi Annan, is a welcome confirmation of the importance he attaches to the role of this Conference.

The Pakistan delegation also wishes to welcome to the CD the distinguished Foreign Minister of Australia, whose statement, as usual, has illustrated Australia's abiding commitment and contribution to global nuclear and conventional disarmament.

Following the conclusion of the CTBT, the CD is called upon to determine the issues on which it will next open negotiations. It would be best to leave aside, for in-depth consultations, the question of revising and updating our agenda - the so-called "Decalogue" - and to focus at present on the work programme of the CD for 1997.

The Pakistan delegation believes that the issues on which the CD will negotiate this year should reflect the imperatives for disarmament dictated by the evolution in the world situation and the balance of interests and priorities of all CD members, not only one State or a group of States. The CTBT veto last year by one country, no matter how regrettable, is no justification to bypass the mandate of this Conference. Exaggerated fears of future impasse do not justify unilateral processes which will result in the more rapid conclusion of hollow agreements.

Pakistan believes that you have presented a balanced proposal for the CD's 1997 work programme. My delegation is prepared to take up consideration of all the items listed in your paper. Let me offer some comments on the major issues.

Like most other members of this Conference, Pakistan attaches the highest importance to opening negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on nuclear disarmament. Throughout the past year, the Group of 21 has repeatedly affirmed its formal proposal for the establishment of an ad hoc committee to open negotiations on nuclear disarmament.

With the end of the cold war, there is now an unprecedented opportunity to renounce and eliminate nuclear weapons. Indeed, some successes have been achieved: START-I and II, the NPT's indefinite extension, and the CTBT's conclusion.

Nevertheless, the nuclear threat may now be escalating, rather than declining. Firstly, the nuclear-weapon States wish to retain their nuclear arsenals, even if at drastically reduced levels, "for the foreseeable future". Nuclear deterrence is now propagated against "unforeseen threats" rather than specific adversaries. Multipolar nuclear deterrence is inherently more unstable, and thus more dangerous, than the bilateral cold war doctrine of mutually assured destruction (MAD). Will deterrence remain effective if old contests are renewed or new competitions are opened among the nuclear-weapon States in the future? Since there are no strategic confrontations at present, is it not wiser to seize the moment to prohibit and eliminate nuclear weapons altogether?

Instead of contracting, the compass of nuclear weapons appears to be enlarging. A statement issued last 18 December by the Defence Ministers of one major alliance stated:

> "New members [of this alliance] therefore will be expected to support the concept of deterrence and the essential role nuclear weapons play in the alliance strategy".

In our view, this would amount to the horizontal proliferation of the nuclear threat, if not horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Moreover, nuclear weapons are not being restricted to a deterrence role. New "missions" are being proposed for nuclear weapons, perhaps to justify their indefinite retention. After its signature of the Protocol to the Pelindaba Treaty, creating the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone, a senior official of one major nuclear-weapon State asserted that it "will not limit the options available to [this nuclear Power] in response to an attack by [a treaty] party using weapons of mass destruction". The same alliance communiqué I mentioned previously also stated that efforts will be made "to develop on an accelerated basis new force goals to address proliferation risks". Thus, it seems that any country is open to the threat of use of nuclear weapons if it is considered to pose a "proliferation risk" - nuclear, chemical or biological. And adherence to the NPT, the CWC or the BWC is irrelevant. For, as another senior representative of the same Power stated, on 26 November 1996, during the BW Review Conference: "surely we know, based on experience, the membership in a regime is no guarantee of compliance". The implicit and explicit threats against non-nuclear-weapon States are, unfortunately, likely to breed the very dangers they are designed to prevent.

It is not unreasonable for the Group of 21 to press for nuclear disarmament and the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. This is now not only the Cartagena consensus, but also the ICJ's advisory opinion, the recommendation of the Canberra Commission, the view of the United Nations General Assembly and, above all, the dictate of common sense and of the human instinct for survival.

The world does not have the luxury of waiting for the major nuclear Powers to convince their visionary legislators to ratify START-II and rapidly conclude START-III, while the CD collectively sits on its hands.

The 2,000-plus nuclear weapons left with each of the two nuclear Powers, and the hundreds available to the other nuclear Powers, will still be sufficient to completely obliterate human civilization. Nor can the demand for CD negotiations on nuclear disarmament be deflected by incantation of the "Principles and objectives" adopted at the NPT Extension Conference. Two of the three "objectives" listed in that document - the CTBT and the FMCT - are construed by their proponents mainly as non-proliferation rather than nuclear disarmament agreements. The third objective, i.e. systematic efforts for nuclear disarmament, is what the G-21 is proposing for negotiations in the CD. Is it seriously contemplated that nuclear disarmament efforts could be pursued in the NPT review process, when its parties have failed to agree on a review of the Treaty's implementation at their last three review conferences? Is the assertion made here by three nuclear Powers that nuclear disarmament will be possible only if the non-proliferation regime is maintained designed to justify holding back from the third objective in the "Principles and objectives" document?

Pakistan is convinced that the international community can best pursue the imperative of nuclear disarmament in the CD - the only body which exists to conduct multilateral negotiations on disarmament. Nuclear disarmament is an amenable subject for negotiations; and the CD is the appropriate forum where such negotiations should be conducted. If nuclear weapons involved only the five nuclear-weapons States, they would not have brought the CTBT and the FMCT to this body for negotiations. If, as has been asserted, 20 countries possess the capability to build nuclear weapons, would it be reasonable or even wise to exclude them from nuclear disarmament negotiations? I would submit that the star-gazers are those who want this body to wait for START-II and START-III before contemplating any multilateral action on nuclear disarmament.

My delegation believes that the CD should seek to promote at least four important objectives during 1997 and beyond in the context of nuclear disarmament.

First, it is urgent to secure a legally binding international agreement committing all States - nuclear and non-nuclear - to the objective of complete elimination of nuclear weapons. This, we understand, is also the central recommendation of the Canberra Commission. We should be able to adopt a simple, short treaty which would contain such a commitment and an undertaking to pursue "good faith" negotiations to achieve the goal of eliminating nuclear weapons in the foreseeable future.

Second, we must open negotiations on a programme for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons within an agreed and specific time-frame. A group of 28 countries, including Pakistan, have proposed a draft programme in CD/1419. This proposal, and counter-proposals if any, should be the subject of negotiations in the CD this year.

The negotiations we are seeking would be designed to elaborate a programme, to identify the measures which constitute a part of the programme, their inter se priorities and the phases and time-frames within which these measures would be achieved. In our view, each disarmament measure included in the programme would be negotiated through a mechanism - bilateral, regional, multilateral or global - which is the most appropriate for that specific measure. The nature of that specific disarmament measure would itself indicate the countries whose participation will be relevant in negotiating it.

Third, the CD should also pursue specific measures for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. In this context, Pakistan is prepared to commence work on the fissile materials convention. We had welcomed the adoption of the Shannon report which reflected the understanding that the scope of the proposed treaty would be further considered in the ad hoc committee. We would like to be assured explicitly that our concerns regarding stockpiles, especially unequal stockpiles, will be addressed in negotiating this treaty. Else, this treaty, too, will be another measure for non-proliferation only. It would make no contribution to nuclear disarmament.

Apart from the fissile materials convention, there are other measures of nuclear disarmament which can be negotiated in the CD forthwith. These could include a protocol to the CTBT designed to conclusively halt the qualitative development of nuclear weapons. Such a protocol should contain a categorical commitment by the nuclear-weapon States not to improve their nuclear weapons. It could also entail the closure of nuclear test sites and the international inspection of those facilities which have been designed to test or keep nuclear weapons "operational".

Similarly, one or more agreements can be negotiated to remove nuclear warheads from missiles and other delivery systems and place both under internationally safeguarded storage. This would be a significantly rapid way to enhance international security and stability.

The fourth objective in the nuclear arena should be to secure credible, legally binding and unconditional assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. Pakistan has consistently pointed out the shortcomings of the assurances so far offered by the nuclear Powers. Now it is clear that even the NPT parties have no guarantee of security against the nuclear threat. The nuclear Powers have reserved the right to determine arbitrarily when and against whom they will use or threaten to use nuclear weapons.

We hope, therefore, that the Ad Hoc Committee on negative security assurances will be reconstituted. It should examine ways and means to reassure all non-nuclear-weapon States against the threat or use of nuclear weapons. These could include technically verifiable commitments by the nuclear Powers not to target their weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States.

Pakistan has often affirmed that while nuclear weapons remain the focus of international concern, we cannot ignore the threats to peace and breaches of the peace emanating from conventional weapons.

Having lived with the long war in Afghanistan, we are fully cognisant of the toll taken by anti-personnel landmines. Therefore, we joined actively in the process which led to the conclusion of the revised Protocol II of the "inhumane" weapons Convention. As we all know, the negotiations for a revised Protocol II were complex and difficult. If a complete ban on APLs had been pressed, there would have been no consensus on the revised protocol.

The question before us is: what is the best means of ameliorating and eliminating the suffering and danger posed by anti-personnel landmines? Our view is that the international community should pursue three aims.

> One, to secure the widest possible adherence to the new Protocol II. In this context, it is legitimate to expect that two thirds of the States which voted for General Assembly resolution 51/45 S, calling for a complete ban, will, as an indication of their commitment, take the first step of adhering to Protocol II;
>
> Two, we must mount an invigorated programme to eliminate the landmines which have been laid in the past and which are responsible for the 25,000 people killed by landmines last year;
>
> Three, explore, in the CD, the further measures we can take to move towards the ultimate goal of prohibiting anti-personnel landmines without jeopardizing the security of States. We propose that a special coordinator be appointed to conduct such an exploration and evolve appropriate terms of reference for negotiations in the CD on anti-personnel landmines.

The escalating production and acquisition of armaments by some States have created insecurity and instability in several regions of the world. Such imbalance and insecurity also creates incentives for the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The attempt to control the transfer of armaments without regard to asymmetries can accentuate imbalance and the threats to peace instead of ameliorating such threats in various regions.

Pakistan believes that, in most instances, the regional approach offers the most effective framework to successfully negotiate agreements for conventional arms control as well as aspects of non-proliferation. The General Assembly has asked the Conference on Disarmament to negotiate "principles" for conventional arms control within the regional and subregional framework. This will make a useful contribution to specific negotiations for conventional arms control in various regions of the world. The Conference on Disarmament should commence this process in 1997.

South Asia has been described as the most dangerous place in the world. Apart from vetoing the CTBT and declaring its nuclear options open, our neighbour is also embarked on massive new acquisitions of offensive weapons and weapons systems. It is proceeding with the creeping deployment of the Prithvi, a short-range, nuclear-capable ballistic missile, whose declared targets include Pakistan's airfields, military formations, oil refineries and factories. No major Pakistani city will be out of reach of this missile. In case of a presumed attack, our response time will be as short as five minutes. And Pakistan will have to assume that the Prithvi is intended to be a nuclear carrier.

Over the past few decades, Pakistan has been obliged to respond to the escalating steps of proliferation by our neighbour. Perversely, we have faced the brunt of the international reaction for such escalation. Now we hear appeals to us to sign the CTBT. Our friends know very well where this appeal should be directed. Unfortunately, in our neighbour's capital, non-proliferation tigers turn into pussy-cats.

Pakistan has demonstrated extreme self-restraint. This is often taken for granted. In the face of threats from across our border, in face of efforts to erode our capacity for self-defence, we reserve the right to take all appropriate measures to safeguard our national security.

Pakistan has made constructive proposals to address the problems of security, arms control and non-proliferation in South Asia. We hope these proposals will evoke a positive response from the international community, especially our neighbours.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador Akram for his statement and kind words he addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Algeria, Ambassador Mohamed Salah Dembri.

Mr. DEMBRI (Algeria) (translated from French): Mr. President, since it falls to me to contribute to the current debate begun by the Conference on Disarmament on its agenda and its programme for the present session, allow me first of all to add the voice of the Algerian delegation to all those which have already taken the floor to congratulate you on taking up the Chair of our assembly and assure you of our full support for the success of the work on which we are embarking under your eminent leadership. I would also like to associate myself with all those who have commended the praiseworthy efforts of your predecessor in this role, the Ambassador of Poland, our colleague Mr. Dembinski, and who have expressed the collective gratitude which we owe to the Secretary-General of the Conference and Personal Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General, Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, his deputy Mr. Abdelkader Bensmail, and all the members of the secretariat for their readiness to help and their kind solicitude. Lastly, the duty of courtesy prompts me to thank all those colleagues who have welcomed me to this forum and assure them that in relations with everyone, my delegation will, as in the past, display a spirit of mutual help and cooperation open to harmonious convergence and positive achievements.

If we consider the diachronic stanzas which have marked the Conference on Disarmament, since its establishment, it is customary for the sessions that appear on its inventory to record two periods of intense animation, more specifically at the opening of the proceedings and on their completion, because they first reveal the obligation to achieve a synthesis in the wealth of adversarial debate and they record in the *terminus ad quem* the satisfaction of a duty accomplished. Thus it is incumbent on us all, without haste, not only to provide our assessments and our positions on the subjects proposed for discussion but also to contribute to establishing an overall synthesis which, arrived at in good faith and responsibly, will certainly promote our joint comprehension of what is at stake in disarmament and enable us to reach - for there is no other option - an approach which is based on consensus, and therefore strong, and therefore resolute.

The agenda of the Conference on Disarmament poses two problems which are closely interrelated: what substantive issues should we include in it, and under what priorities should we begin to negotiate on them and under what organizational arrangements? The positions expressed and the arguments presented on this matter here and there, even when they refer to selectivity or the imperative need for an integrated and global approach, cannot be opposed because their purpose is in fact to bear witness to the vigour of that fundamental text, the famous Decalogue, drawn up in 1978 by the United Nations General Assembly, which undeniably highlights the primacy of nuclear disarmament. And our discussions, in their most immediate topicality, demonstrate the dissatisfaction we feel faced with certain achievements which, while praiseworthy, remain piecemeal in nature because they do not take into account, in a complete and total manner, the aspirations for security and peace of all human societies on our planet.

This is the case, to mention only a few, for the SALT, INF and START treaties, which remain bilateral agreements and do not meet the concerns of the international community as a whole. It is also the case with the NPT, which, while having been extended indefinitely in May 1995, reveals in the wake of subsequent applications, the disappointments and frustrations engendered by the CTBT because, according to the assessment made here in Geneva or in New York by many delegations, it did not take into account the dimension of nuclear disarmament. And if nevertheless many countries did accede to it, including my own, this certainly reflects the conviction and the hope that they attach to the collective and multilateral task of disarmament, as reflected in the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice of 8 July 1996, which reminded us that all States have an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects, and under strict and effective international control.

Thus one can understand why the United Nations General Assembly has for years been adopting resolutions calling upon the Conference on Disarmament to begin negotiations on nuclear disarmament and, correlatively, the reasons for which here in Geneva the Group of 21 has called on many occasions for the establishment of an ad hoc committee to begin negotiations on a phased programme of nuclear disarmament in order to achieve the final elimination of those weapons in accordance with a jointly agreed and determined timetable. And in fact it was 28 countries, including my own, which, to elucidate their initiative, presented a comprehensive and consistent programme of action which includes the proposals made by various parties for these planned negotiations, without excluding any.

If I have sought to outline some landmarks on the path we have jointly and collectively followed, it is because three considerations in my view may be formulated on the basis of the conclusions of our discussions. First, there is no one in this room who would deny that nuclear disarmament today is an objective enjoying broad support which has been made a priority by the international community and international public opinion. Secondly, there is no country which would declare today that it is hostile to the achievement of that objective. Thirdly, we all note that the differences lie in approaches and are by no means insurmountable.

Against this background, allow me to defend the global approach which offers us the advantage of being more rational because it avoids piecemeal perceptions, wiser because it allows for the establishment of the balances necessary in any negotiations, and finally fairer because it does not marginalize anyone; quite the contrary, it rejects measures that are not lasting and calculations that are narrow and brings all those involved together in the same creative synergy. For these reasons my delegation considers it necessary, at this stage, to give due importance to the global approach which would integrate within nuclear disarmament an instrument to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, a convention banning their use or the threat of their use, a treaty aimed at their elimination and lastly a convention banning the production of fissile material for military use.

This initiative, advocated by my country, which is strongly convinced of the virtues of multilateral action, will incorporate and at the same time satisfy and illustrate the demands and perceptions of all parties: thus the ban on fissile material will be replaced in its natural framework as a nuclear disarmament measure, the achievements in the area of limiting and reducing nuclear arsenals will be inserted in a multilateral process, the legitimate fears of non-nuclear-weapon States will be taken into account in a binding legal regime which will generate confidence among nations. My country, which is very concerned to achieve consensus in this body and very attached to the virtues of balance, which remains the most effective way of resolving the most complex situations, reaffirms once again that on the eve of the next NPT review conference and the holding of the fourth special session of the General Assembly on disarmament, it is crucial that the CD should respond to the many signals which it has received by addressing the question of nuclear disarmament in a fundamental manner and should give in return the signal which is expected of it by the international community.

I have described here the momentum which was generated in the Conference on Disarmament and outside this forum and which has been given to nuclear disarmament. It would be to everyone's serious disadvantage to break this momentum by directing the work of the CD towards other negotiations, which, however legitimate and necessary they might be, cannot in our view invert the priorities or downgrade them. The need for effectiveness which should be attached to them should be reflected on the functional and organic level. First, on the functional level, an ad hoc committee, with a mandate to negotiate on nuclear disarmament, is in our view the most courageous and the most rational route to take. Negotiations on a convention banning fissile material would find a place along this path. Next, on the organic level, the focusing of efforts and aspirations on all sides towards the Conference on Disarmament, the sole multilateral negotiating body in the area of disarmament, would give the negotiations greater legitimacy and would consolidate the commitment of all nations towards non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament.

Today the problem does not take the form of agreeing or refusing to negotiate on a given item within the CD. It is located at the level of priorities. We can recognize that any item to be negotiated in the CD is urgent in itself, but we must also say that among those urgent issues there are priorities. Recognizing these priorities would help to give a viable and ordered form to the programme of work which we have to decide on together. This order of priorities, in the view of my delegation, places nuclear disarmament at the heart of the concerns of the Conference on Disarmament, in terms of both conception and negotiations.

In this regard, allow me to quote the voice of authority. The laws of coincidence dictated that on 21 January 1997, the very day when our first plenary session began, Georges Charpak, the distinguished winner of the Nobel Prize for Physics in 1992 and in 1993 and 1994 a member of a panel on strategic weapons established by the French Prime Minister, presented to the press his latest book, entitled Feux follets et champignons nucléaires, which he wrote together with the great American physicist Richard Garwin, a specialist in the area of strategy and nuclear armaments. In an interview he gave to a French newspaper on the same day, the French Nobel Prize winner said that there is a need for huge cuts in the arms-related nuclear sector. He explained that Russian and American negotiators are aiming at a figure of 15,000 strategic warheads in the year 2003, whereas the numbers should fall to less than a few hundred nuclear warheads, which he considers quite sufficient for deterrence. He also emphasized the need to break out of the confusion concerning dismantling, which is presented as a lengthy and costly operation, concealing the fact that nuclear weapons can very easily and quickly be made unusable. Let us thus in our turn maintain the momentum which has thus been generated with the CTBT, and let us place it and consolidate it in its natural trajectory of nuclear disarmament. That is the import of the message that my country wished to present to you today through me.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador Dembri for his statement and the kind words he addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Japan, Ambassador Kurokochi.

Mrs. KUROKOCHI (Japan): Mr. President, at the outset, I would like to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament at the beginning of its 1997 session. It is a great pleasure for me to see a close Asian neighbour presiding over the Conference, especially so soon after your country became a member. It is fortunate that we can rely on your able leadership at this most challenging time. I can assure you of the fullest cooperation from my delegation. I would also like to express my appreciation to Ambassador Dembinski, the previous President of the Conference, for the exemplary way in which he carried out his important functions. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Secretary-General of the United Nations, His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan, for his very important address to the Conference this morning. In addition, we are grateful to the Honourable Alexander Downer, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Australia, for coming and sharing with us the views of his Government. Their presence was an important contribution to the work of the Conference.

Before I commence my statement may I also take a moment to warmly welcome those Ambassadors who recently arrived? Their participation will surely enrich our deliberations.

Last year the international community made significant progress in disarmament, both of conventional weapons and weapons of mass destruction. The most notable, of course, is the adoption after two and a half years of negotiations in the CD, of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty at the fiftieth session of the United Nations General Assembly with an overwhelming majority of support. In addition, among other important developments, I would like to point out the strengthening of Protocol II of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) and the ratification by the sixty-fifth State enabling the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC).

Nevertheless, we still have tremendous tasks before us and we must continue to move forward the disarmament process steadily in 1997. One important task is the preparation for the implementation of the CTBT, particularly, the successful start of the work of the Preparatory Commission and the Provisional Technical Secretariat of the CTBT Organization. It is also essential for all States which have not yet done so to sign and ratify the CTBT in order to ensure its universality and entry into force of the treaty without delay. Japan, for its part, is currently making the necessary preparations for its ratification.

With regard to nuclear disarmament, while the CTBT is a historic milestone on the road to a world free of nuclear weapons, we cannot afford to be complacent about this achievement and stop our efforts here. It is indispensable that we take a further step to promote nuclear disarmament, following the indefinite extension of the NPT and the adoption of the CTBT. In this regard, the commencement of the strengthened NPT review process in April has great significance.

While I see no need to explain in detail Japan's well-known position as a strong advocate of disarmament, I would like to take this opportunity to elaborate Japan's views with regard to the tasks of the CD at this critical juncture, namely, the CD agenda and its programme of work in 1997.

Needless to say, the nuclear issue is a matter of major concern in the CD and delegations have expressed a variety of views reflecting different national positions. However, if I may make a simplified observation, there seem to be two different approaches on how to discuss this issue in the CD. One could be called a "blueprint approach", which calls upon, as the first step, an unequivocal commitment by nuclear-weapon States to eliminate their nuclear arsenals within a prescribed period, and then starts to work on the steps required for its achievement. The other approach might be called an "incremental approach", which tries to steadily accumulate realistic disarmament measures, step by step, with the ultimate goal of achieving a world free of nuclear weapons.

In Japan's view, the possibility to achieve a concrete result lies only in the second approach. We must, taking into consideration the realities of the international security environment, agree on those specific measures which the entire international community, including the nuclear-weapon States, can support. This view was reiterated most recently by Foreign Minister Yukihiko Ikeda at the seminar on "Nuclear disarmament after the indefinite extension of the NPT" held in December last year in Kyoto. Based on this belief, for three years in succession, Japan took the initiative of the United Nations General Assembly for the adoption of the resolution entitled "Nuclear disarmament with a view to the ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons". As Foreign Minister Ikeda stated at the aforementioned seminar, the overwhelming majority of support that this resolution received attests to the widespread acceptance that Japan's basic approach enjoys in the international community.

At this point, I would like to stress that we must renounce the so-called linkage strategy. This approach, in which no agreement is possible on any item unless the CD agrees on the establishment of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament within a time-bound framework, is certainly a recipe for blocking any kind of progress in nuclear disarmament in the CD or for that matter, practically any work in the CD. We should take whatever steps are possible, even if small, so that further progress may be built upon what is achieved. By the same token, although disarmament in the field of conventional weapons is certainly very important, further negotiations on nuclear disarmament must not be discouraged by the lagging progress of conventional weapons disarmament.

Concerning nuclear disarmament, we believe that a fissile material cut-off treaty is, without doubt, a priority in the CD. As paragraph 4 of the "Principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament" specifies, we should immediately start negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty. The three items listed in paragraph 4 under the title of "Nuclear disarmament" in the NPT "Principles and objectives" are the central issues not only in terms of nuclear disarmament but also in terms of nuclear non-proliferation, that is to say, the maintenance of the credibility of the NPT system.

Now that the CTBT has been adopted, the CD, as the sole multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament, should continue to play its role to further enhance nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. It is still vivid in my memory that, on 23 March 1995, I myself, as the then President of the CD, hit the gavel to mark the consensus decision to establish an ad hoc committee on a fissile material cut-off treaty. Japan strongly appeals to all CD members to establish an ad hoc committee and begin negotiations on a cut-off treaty immediately.

Having said that, I would like to make one more point clear. We believe that the CD should not limit its discussions on the nuclear issue to a cut-off treaty alone. We should make our best efforts to explore what role the CD could play for the promotion of nuclear disarmament. In this context, I would like to suggest that we consider the possibility of establishing some kind of forum, not necessarily an ad hoc committee, in the CD to exchange views from a wider perspective on how we can best advance nuclear disarmament in the future.

The negotiations on the actual reduction of nuclear weapons have to be conducted between or among the nuclear-weapon States. As paragraph 4 of the NPT "Principles and objectives" states, the nuclear-weapon States should pursue the reduction of nuclear weapons with determination. They must move it forward without cease.

It should not be forgotten, however, that the NPT article VI obliges each of the States parties to the Treaty, not only the nuclear-weapon States, to pursue negotiations on effective measures relating to nuclear disarmament and on a treaty on general and complete disarmament.

Moreover, with their devastating power, nuclear weapons cause catastrophic destruction; they can in an instant take a tremendous toll in human life and destroy the basic infrastructure of a society. In addition, due to atomic radiation, nuclear weapons can also cause the victims who survive an attack itself indescribable suffering which may continue until their death. Since the effects of nuclear war can be global, the whole international community cannot remain indifferent to nuclear disarmament. Rather, it has a legitimate right to be concerned.

Allow me also to say a few words as regards conventional weapons.

The first issue I would like to refer to is anti-personnel landmines, which the former United Nations Secretary General called "weapons of mass destruction in slow motion". In the view of my Government, it is important to take measures in the following four areas: first, strengthening of international restrictions on landmines; second, cooperation for mine clearance activities by the United Nations and other organizations; third, development of technologies for mine detection and clearance; and fourth, assistance for the rehabilitation of victims.

With regard to the last three points, Japan is preparing to convene an international conference at the senior official level in Tokyo in this coming March. We hope that this conference will make a significant contribution to the strengthening of international efforts in these areas.

Regarding the first point, restrictions, Japan supports international efforts toward a global ban on anti-personnel landmines, as Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto announced at the G7 summit in Lyon last June. Furthermore, we co-sponsored United Nations General Assembly resolution 51/45 S, which calls for an international agreement to ban APLs.

(Mrs. Kurokochi, Japan)

As for the negotiating forum, Japan supports the CD because we attach great importance to the realization of a "global and effective" total ban on APLs. The CD, which is the sole multilateral negotiating body on disarmament with rich experience and expertise, and which has the participation of key countries in the landmine issue, could provide the most appropriate forum for this goal. In addition, it is important for the credibility and function of the CD itself to take up this issue which concerns all humanity. In this context, we warmly welcome the recent announcement made by the United States.

We are aware, however, that achieving a comprehensive ban on APLs in the near future is not an easy task. If it turns out to be very difficult to reach an agreement in the CD to start negotiations on a total ban, it might be more practical, as suggested by the Ambassador of France last week, that we begin with one of the components of a comprehensive ban as a part of a phased approach. For example, we think that the commencement of negotiations focusing on a total ban on the export of landmines would be a good starting-point. According to a UNIDIR Newsletter, virtually all of the landmines in most of the worst-affected nations were provided by foreign sources.

At the same time, we should take advantage of every possible approach to deal with the landmine problem. In this connection, the so-called "Ottawa Process" which started at the Ottawa Conference last year is an important initiative to accelerate political momentum toward a total ban on APLs. While we support having negotiations for a total ban in the CD, we welcome and support Canada's initiative because we regard the Ottawa Process and negotiations in the CD as complementary and not mutually exclusive approaches towards our common goal.

As regards the CCW, the Government of Japan is now making its best efforts to ratify the new Protocol II of the CCW at the earliest possible date. We hope that the Diet will approve the ratification during its current session.

The second issue I would like to refer to is transparency in armaments, in particular the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. Japan attaches great importance to the United Nations Arms Register as a measure to enhance confidence-building and security among countries concerned. While this system has contributed significantly to the enhancement of transparency in armaments, it should, we believe, be even further developed and strengthened. Here let me recall United Nations General Assembly resolution 49/75 C, which requests the Secretary-General to prepare a report on the continuing operation of the Register and its further development, taking into account the work of the Conference on Disarmament, with a view to a decision at its fifty-second session. As is clear from this, the international community has entrusted the CD to conduct its work on the Arms Register system this year.

Regarding "Regional aspects of conventional arms regulation and disarmament" in the suggested draft provisional agenda/work programme presented by you, we would like to see some clarification regarding, for example, how we should take into account the specific security environments of each region, and how we should consider nuclear disarmament in each region in negotiations on conventional weapons disarmament.

In discussing the CD agenda, I would be remiss if I did not express my deep appreciation for your untiring efforts to discharge your challenging task at this difficult time. I would also like to congratulate you on your important initiative to formulate a draft provisional agenda/work programme, which can serve as a good basis for possible agreement. I hope that your efforts will prove to be fruitful so that we have an agreed agenda and embark on a concrete programme of work as soon as possible.

Last but not least, concerning the important question of further expansion of membership, Japan also supports the President's efforts to appoint a special coordinator with a broad mandate and we hold high hopes that the special coordinator will bring about a solution which is satisfactory to all.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador Kurokochi for her statement and the kind words she addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of the United Kingdom, Ambassador Sir Michael Weston.

Sir Michael WESTON (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland): Since this session of the Conference on Disarmament began on 21 January, we have heard forceful calls for negotiations to begin on a total global ban on anti-personnel landmines. I refer in particular to the statements by the distinguished Foreign Ministers of Italy and Australia and to those of the distinguished representatives of the United States and France. Indeed, I prefaced my own statement on nuclear disarmament on 21 January with just such a call for negotiations on a ban on anti-personnel landmines. I also welcomed the United States' decision to seek to initiate negotiations for this purpose here at the Conference on Disarmament.

Of all the issues before us, this is the one that most directly affects most people most immediately. The Red Cross estimates that there are 120 million anti-personnel mines laid across the world. The Red Cross also estimates that one person is killed or maimed by anti-personnel landmines every 20 minutes. Most of these victims are civilians - many are children. There is no question that the reckless and indiscriminate use of these weapons causes appalling and quite pointless suffering.

This plague is a huge and ever-present burden to countries struggling to rebuild. Like many of us, I have seen the problem at first hand. Following the withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait in 1992, large areas of that country were rendered effectively inaccessible by the mines laid by the Iraqis and the hospitals were full of civilians, mostly children, maimed by these horrid weapons. The memory of those children - many of whom had lost an eye, a hand, a leg or worse - will remain with me always.

Important first steps have already been taken to deal with the problem. The United Kingdom has taken a lead internationally in seeking to control the export and use of anti-personnel landmines. We ourselves have a moratorium on the export of all anti-personnel landmines. So too do all our European Union partners. And, in common with many others, we have pledged our support for a total, global ban on these weapons. The time has come to take this forward.

As I said on 21 January, this Conference, with its wide membership, the way in which observers are able to participate fully in its negotiations, and its established position as the sole multilateral disarmament forum of the international community, has clear advantages as an international forum for tackling the roots of this problem and achieving agreement on a worldwide ban. To be effective - and by that I mean to have a significant impact in bringing to a permanent and early end the appalling suffering inflicted by these weapons - an international agreement must include the countries of real concern: the major producers and exporters and those countries which use landmines indiscriminately.

The United Kingdom therefore warmly welcomed the proposal made by my distinguished colleague, the Ambassador of France, at our last plenary meeting on 23 January, for the establishment of an ad hoc committee in the CD to negotiate a ban on anti-personnel landmines. This is a valuable and timely initiative, which the United Kingdom wholeheartedly supports.

As a means of building further on the French initiative, I am today tabling a proposal for a negotiating mandate for such an ad hoc committee.

The text of the United Kingdom's proposed mandate is attached to the copies of my statement which are being distributed. I should like to request that the text of this proposed mandate should be circulated as an official document of the CD.

As our proposed mandate makes clear, the objective of the Ad Hoc Committee would be "to negotiate, for conclusion at the earliest possible date, a universal, effectively verifiable and legally binding international agreement to ban totally the use, stockpiling, production and transfer of anti-personnel landmines". This language reflects, but also builds on, operative paragraph 1 of General Assembly resolution 51/45 S, which was adopted last December with 141 positives votes and no negative votes. We believe, from the support that this objective has received from a wide range of States, both here in the CD and beyond, that there is an increasingly widespread commitment to strive for its achievement.

We are conscious that there may not yet been an immediate commitment on the part of all CD members to negotiate a total ban in one step. We regret this. But we believe that, if we are to make rapid and genuine progress towards the goal which so many of us share, we need to recognize this reality and to find positive ways to address it.

In our draft mandate, we have therefore proposed, as a vital first step towards the objective of the complete elimination of these weapons, the intensive negotiation of a universal, effectively verifiable and legally binding international agreement to ban totally the export, import or transfer of all types of anti-personnel landmines as well as of their components and of anti-personnel landmine technology.

Such a ban, or a moratorium, is already observed unilaterally by many countries. If the small number of countries who have not yet taken this step join with us now, we can quickly conclude a global and verifiable agreement. This would achieve two important results. First, it would deliver early, real humanitarian benefits by reducing the scale of suffering from anti-personnel landmines. Secondly, it would help us to press forward to the goal of a total, global ban.

What should be the next steps after the conclusion of an export ban? No doubt like other delegations, the United Kingdom has a number of ideas. But we have deliberately avoided setting these down in the draft mandate. We consider that, in getting the work of the ad hoc committee started urgently, we should not lose time in debating this. It also seems to us that, in the course of negotiations on an export ban, current views may evolve. We have therefore proposed that the ad hoc committee itself should be charged with the task of considering and making recommendations on the next steps.

One further, important aspect of our draft is its recognition that the ad hoc committee will not be working in a vacuum. In particular, the ad hoc committee will need to take account of the work recently completed in the review of the United Nations Convention on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons, particularly the amended Protocol II, which, of course, is directly relevant to anti-personnel landmines. It will also want to take account of work on anti-personnel landmines which may be taken forward in other forums, such as the "Ottawa Process". The draft mandate clearly provides for this.

Finally, the draft mandate calls on the ad hoc committee to report to the Conference on Disarmament on the progress of its work before the conclusion of the 1997 session. The United Kingdom is always hesitant about setting deadlines or even target dates. But we do believe that it should be possible at least to complete the first step - that is, the ban on exports - and to identify the next steps on the road to a total and universal ban by the end of the current CD session in September.

This Conference, working by consensus, has a unique opportunity to reduce the suffering of innocent civilians and to check the humanitarian catastrophe caused by the indiscriminate and irresponsible use of anti-personnel landmines. We must not delay.

Mr. BERGUÑO (Chile) (translated from Spanish): Mr. President, allow me in this first statement in the 1997 session of the Conference on Disarmament to congratulate you and to thank you and the Secretary-General of the Conference for your suggestions concerning the agenda and programme of work, and to convey to you our best wishes and our fullest cooperation.

Certain comments at the end of the last session reflected deep concern over the future of the Conference as a credible and effective multilateral negotiating forum in disarmament issues. Confidence in the system is waning. There is a lack of clarity and purpose in the objectives that goes beyond the ritual of the current discussion on the agenda and the programme of work. Fundamental changes on the international scene are calling into question the logic of the group system, the structure, the traditional balance of forces within the Conference; and, above all, its underlying assumptions and outmoded practices. Our Magna Carta was adopted when international relations were relatively structured and fixed. The working methods and procedures which are ordinarily used in the Conference as instruments for decision-making were devised to serve the old order; in the years to come, the challenge will be not only to adjust our strategic thinking to the demise of the East-West dialectic but to come to grips with a security agenda which is more diverse, rich and complex, both in geopolitical and in functional terms. It will place as many demands on our material resources as on our intellectual capabilities.

The key phrase regarding future international negotiations is: the structure and context for the consideration of nuclear disarmament. First, concerning matters of form: we clearly require a broader mechanism, instead of the traditional committee, for the consideration in depth of all nuclear disarmament issues, with a view to identifying those issues which should be earmarked as priority subjects for negotiation. Second, concerning the question of content: more than once I have made reference here to the document introduced by 28 countries of the G-21. It is a well-known fact that Chile is not one of the 28 sponsors of the document in question. We believe that in the current debate two different methodologies are confronting each other in the most sterile manner. One is the Utopian quest for timetables, linkages and stages leading towards the ultimate goal of total disarmament under international control. The other is a pragmatic, astute handling of available opportunities to demilitarize or denuclearize areas or materials that have become obsolete as a result of technological development.

Above and beyond that dichotomy, we abide by a positive and dynamic concept of the disarmament process: relevant Utopias to extrapolate the words of a distinguished American political scientist. Such a concept treats the disarmament process as a global system which is, in turn, an integral part of a historico-temporal security system. Steps in the disarmament process should be taken with a view to gradually modifying the existing correlation of forces, including the demands - however unjustified we may think they are - for nuclear deterrence, for global and regional balances and for the requirements of the global system of collective security. We need to pursue these relevant Utopias and I believe the programme proposed by the 28 countries should be considered in the light of the present international context, but also within the expanding horizon of an international disarmament agenda which is intended to have a decisive impact on the status quo and advance even further the swing of the pendulum in the global security system.

Work has been completed on the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty; the Non-Proliferation Treaty has been extended and enriched with a work programme inspired by its principles and objectives; a decision has been taken to step up work on strengthening the Biological Weapons Convention; and, following the conference to review the 1981 Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, a new process has been initiated towards the ultimate goal of banning anti-personnel landmines. The African and South-East Asian nuclear-weapon-free zones have extended the area previously covered by the Antarctic Treaty, the Treaty of Tlatelolco and the Treaty of Rarotonga.

What is the Conference on Disarmament doing with regard to these important developments in the international disarmament agenda? Your suggestions, Mr. President, incorporate some elements that my delegation believes should be given high priority, both in the agenda and in the Conference's programme of work: the establishment of a broad and flexible mechanism for the review and monitoring of all nuclear disarmament issues; a convention on the cut-off of the use of certain fissile materials for hostile purposes; a convention or protocol to the Space Treaty to prevent the weaponization of outer space (a proposal that was made by Ambassador Moher of Canada); the development of a straightforward mandate for the negotiation of operational procedures to ban the use, production, stockpiling and above all the transfer of anti-personnel landmines (Sir Michael Weston's proposal meets this point); and a convention on binding security assurances, whose negotiation might benefit from parallel work which is to be carried out in the first NPT Preparatory Commission in 1997, where a creative approach is needed in order to take full advantage of the unique opportunity offered in the document on "Principles and objectives".

However, as I mentioned at the outset, although we must take decisive and urgent action on all these specific matters, a broader reform is needed to enhance the effectiveness of the Conference on Disarmament in fulfilling its role. All countries have a shared interest in the success of this endeavour, but the developing nations, whose security depends heavily on respect for international law and on the strengthening of international institutions, have certainly more to gain through a reorganized, strong and efficient Conference on Disarmament. I am sure that this desire is widely shared and also reflects the concerns expressed in the message with which the new Secretary-General of the United Nations honoured us in the wise and inspired words in which he noted that there is no institution on Earth better qualified to translate the universal yearning for peace into negotiated practical measures for enhancing international understanding and the security of all nations.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador Berguño for his statement and the kind words he addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Sri Lanka, Ambassador Bernard Goonetilleke.

Mr. GOONETILLEKE (Sri Lanka): Mr. President, allow me to congratulate you on the assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. Representing as you do the Republic of Korea, a country with which Sri Lanka maintains most cordial ties of friendship and cooperation, you can count upon my delegation's full support in the discharge of the onerous duties cast upon you by the presidency of the Conference. I also take this opportunity to congratulate Ambassador Dembinski, your immediate predecessor, for bringing the 1996 session of the Conference to a successful conclusion.

May I, on behalf of my delegation, extend a warm welcome to our new colleagues who have recently joined the Conference, namely, the Ambassadors of Algeria, Australia, Bangladesh, Belgium, Mongolia and Venezuela?

I would also like to take this opportunity to warmly welcome the newly appointed United Nations Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan, and the Foreign Minister of Australia, the Honourable Alexander Downer, to our midst and congratulate them for the inspiring statements they made this morning.

The year 1997 is full of promise for all of us. It also presents new challenges in the field of international peace and security. Maintaining international peace and security was amongst the driving forces that compelled the establishment of the United Nations Organization 51 years ago. Arms limitation and disarmament thus became the cornerstone of the United Nations agenda for peace and security.

Harking back upon the activities of the Conference on Disarmament based on an annual agenda derived from the so-called disarmament Decalogue of the late 1970s, one finds that much has been achieved but that much more remains to be realized. It is appropriate here to remind ourselves that the Decalogue itself is a direct outcome of the United Nations first special session devoted to disarmament (SSOD-I), which, among other things, recognized the CD as the "single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum". Against this background, we understand and appreciate the position taken by some members that any change in the CD's agenda should be preceded by high-political-level consideration of the matter.

The CD's most recent contribution in the field of non-proliferation and disarmament was the conclusion of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty (CTBT) late last year. The CTBT has already attracted a majority of the United Nations membership as its signatories. A major step in the direction of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, which is enhanced by the indefinite extension of the NPT nearly two years ago, the CTBT should serve as yet another stepping-stone leading to nuclear disarmament. Nuclear disarmament per se has assumed importance of the highest order calling for urgent action, on the one hand, for total elimination of the existing stockpiles of nuclear weapons and for prohibition of the development or acquisition of materials required to build such weapons, on the other. Towards this objective my delegation will seek the early establishment of an appropriate mechanism, preferably an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament within the CD. Twenty-eight delegations of the 61-member Conference have, on 7 August 1996, proposed a programme of action for the elimination of nuclear weapons. This proposal and any other proposals on the subject may be examined by the Conference with a view to agreeing upon a mandate and a programme of work for the proposed mechanism.

A fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) is our next priority. The Ad Hoc Committee which was set up in pursuance of the Shannon report (CD/1299 of 24 March 1995) should be reactivated, which, inter alia, would take into account the existing stocks of fissile material. Although Sri Lanka has no difficulty in agreeing to commence the work of the Ad Hoc Committee immediately, we realize that first there should be an understanding on the full range of items to be dealt with by this body in 1997.

Of extreme importance to my delegation is the question of security assurances - both negative and positive. Nothing short of a multilaterally negotiated and legally binding agreement will fulfil this urgent and most pressing need of the non-nuclear-weapon States. It is to be recalled that the decision on "Principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament" of the NPT Review and Extension Conference of 1995 concluded that further steps should be considered to assure non-nuclear-weapon States party to the Treaty against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. Sri Lanka, therefore, strongly supports the call made by some members for the re-establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee on negative security assurances.

My delegation firmly believes in the importance of maintaining outer space as a weapons-free environment. While recognizing the fact that the arms race in that environment which existed during the cold war era has given way to cooperation for peaceful exploration of outer space in the recent past, we recognize the need to ensure that outer space will never again be used for deployment of space-based weapon systems. It is, therefore, important for the Conference to begin consideration of an international agreement that would prevent weaponization of outer space. Towards this end the Conference would do well to re-establish its Ad Hoc Committee on outer space with an appropriate mandate to commence negotiations.

My delegation has taken note of the developments since the First Review Conference of the States parties to the CCW that concluded in Geneva, May 1996. We have observed the further strengthening of the 1980 Convention by means of an amended Protocol on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Mines, Booby Traps and Other Devices (amended Protocol II), and the addition of a "Protocol on Blinding Laser Weapons (Protocol IV)".

These developments clearly illustrate that action has been and is being pursued in the appropriate forum by the States party to the treaty. Parallel to such measures, actions have also been pursued by interested countries in their quest for a global ban on anti-personnel landmines (APLs). These give rise to implications for the current Convention itself as well as for the Conference on Disarmament, with the latter being approached with a view to securing its services to conclude an international agreement banning anti-personnel mines. It has even been suggested, perhaps for the first time, that the CD ought to undertake such a task complementing the work that is being done elsewhere by interested parties.

My delegation has taken note of the CCW review process that was under way since January 1995, and concluded in Geneva last May. The States party to the Convention in their wisdom went to the farthest possible extent in order to strengthen and enhance the treaty regime by adopting an amended Protocol II.

(Mr. Goonetilleke, Sri Lanka)

My delegation also notes that there was overwhelming support at the fifty-first United Nations General Assembly for an international agreement designed to ban anti-personnel landmines. The views expressed by national delegations on the subject were indeed of a wide range extending from humanitarian, national security, self-defence to legal considerations. These views cannot and should not be ignored, for they concerned specific interests of individual member States.

However, the Conference has to reach a consensus on whether or not the CD is the appropriate forum to negotiate such an agreement. Given the positions taken by some delegations on this question, it would, no doubt, take a great deal of friendly persuasion in order that a decision be taken by the CD on this issue. So far as Sri Lanka is concerned, my delegation would take a flexible position on the question whether the proposed agreement should be negotiated within the CD or outside it, our cardinal consideration being the substance of the agreement rather than its negotiating forum.

If the past experiences of CD's negotiating process and its working methods are an index, my delegation is of the view that setting a deadline would run the risk of being counter-productive. We must bear in mind that the Conference will have to take into account various positions taken by the delegations in this Chamber as well as at the United Nations General Assembly. Equally important is the need to balance our priorities and apportion the time available to the CD for fulfilling the tasks entrusted to the Conference to be completed in the course of its current session.

Finally, as I said at the beginning of my statement, in this year of promise and challenge, there is bound to be many a peril if we fail to see the wood for the trees. We have to carefully choose our priorities taking into consideration our capabilities and limitations, so that we could decide on how best to utilize our hard-pressed and meagre resources to advantage. In determining the 1997 agenda for the Conference we need to tread slowly but steadily, not abandoning our time-honoured objectives, while at the same time not failing to take into account the sea change that has overtaken inter-State relations in the final decade of this century, thus necessitating the community of nations to take a fresh look at their own peace and security agenda.

If the Conference were to satisfy all of its members, it would end up with ad hoc committees on nuclear disarmament, negative security assurances, fissile material cut-off treaty, prevention of an arms race in outer space, transparency in armaments, anti-personnel landmines and several other subjects. While that may be an ideal situation, we have to admit the fact that such an arrangement will not be practical due to time constraints of the Conference, and personnel problems faced by individual delegations including my own. It is, therefore, necessary for us to agree upon a realistic and balanced work programme bearing in mind the fact that the CD is a negotiating forum and not a forum for deliberation.

Past experience tells us that the CD can quite effectively negotiate one item at a time. If we stretch ourselves, maybe two, but certainly not more than three items. It is from that point of view that we have to approach the work programme for 1997.

There are several proposals for the agenda/work programme of the CD, including the one submitted by you in your capacity as President of this Conference. Sri Lanka favourably views the division of our work into nuclear weapons and conventional weapons.

With regard to nuclear weapons, in 1995 we had agreed to establish an ad hoc committee on a fissile material cut-off treaty and done some work in the past on negative security assurances under an ad hoc committee established for that purpose. In the circumstances, there should be no difficulty in agreeing on the establishment of one or both of these ad hoc committees. With regard to nuclear disarmament, my delegation would like to ascertain the reaction of the members of the CD to the draft proposal submitted by the Group of 21 for the establishment of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament contained in document CD/1388 of 14 March 1996. Sri Lanka, however, accepts the fact that some groundwork has to be done before the establishment of an ad hoc committee. Initially, this function could be entrusted to a mechanism to be established for that purpose, which could, inter alia, determine the role CD can be entrusted with in the field of nuclear disarmament.

On the other side of the scale is conventional weapons. Sri Lanka is not in a position at present to suggest what specific ad hoc committee should be established to deal with conventional weapons. We would like this to be decided by the Conference. If we can decide on a work programme on the above lines, I am certain that the CD will be able to commence its work soon. If not, the Conference will continue to grope in the dark for many weeks to come.

Let us, therefore, decide to include in the current session's programme of work only those high-priority items for negotiating, allowing the Decalogue to remain on the agenda for the present until such time as the international community is able to focus on it in an appropriate manner.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador Goonetilleke for his statement and the kind words he addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ambassador Sirous Nasseri.

Mr. NASSERI (Islamic Republic of Iran): My congratulations to you, Mr. President, and my deep appreciation to your predecessor, Ambassador Dembinski. A warm welcome also to the United Nations Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, and the Australian Foreign Minister, Mr. Downer, who have addressed us today, as well as to our new friends and colleagues, Ambassador Mernier, Ambassador Campbell, Ambassador Chowdhury, Ambassador Dembri and Ambassador Bold.

1997 promises to be an eventful year for disarmament. In the area of weapons of mass destruction the Chemical Weapons Convention, concluded not long ago at the CD following 25 years of deliberations, will reach its entry into force on 29 April. For the Biological Weapons Convention, a serious initiative has been under way to strengthen the Convention and the negotiation phase is due to commence this year. The first preparatory work for the important NPT review of the year 2000 will be conducted during April. The Provisional Technical Secretariat of the CTBTO, on the other hand, will be established this year to prepare for the implementation of the Treaty. On conventional weapons, the major issue for this year seems to be anti-personnel landmines and the modality for negotiations.

The Chemical Weapons Convention remains the most significant disarmament instrument concluded in the last two decades. With its comprehensive scope, it aims to eradicate an entire class of weapons of mass destruction 10 years after its entry into force. Preparations continue at The Hague for the operational phase of the Convention and the basic foundation has already been laid down. At the same time, discussions continue on a number of key issues with a view to arriving at an agreement before the first Conference of the States Parties.

Despite all efforts, however, it is unclear whether some of these essential elements which were also subject to major debate during the negotiations on the Convention would reach a final conclusion at the end of this exercise. This is particularly true as this last phase of discussions is conducted under serious uncertainties about the future of the Convention.

It has now become evident that the possessors of chemical weapons will not be among the original parties to the treaty at the time of the entry into force. It is clear that the Convention will lose its meaning in the absence of commitment to destroy the existing weapons in accordance with the provisions of the Convention. This is a disarmament convention and should remain as such as the objective of the Convention so stipulates. It cannot be altered after all these years to a convention for non-proliferation.

The major question therefore at The Hague is what to do and which direction to follow. It has become extremely difficult and it seems not possible to find a feasible and practical way to prepare for the Convention. There are major budgetary, administrative and technical implications depending on whether and when the chemical weapons possessors may join. Various scenarios considered so far range from the freezing of implementation to the adoption of a partial and flexible implementation approach all the way to full implementation without regard to the CW possessors and their positions.

The last plenary session of the Preparatory Commission in April will receive a report by the Executive Secretary on the consequences of the non-ratification by the two CW possessors on the Convention and will have to come up with some recommendations to the first Conference of the States Parties. We should of course bear in mind that we all shoulder a major responsibility to preserve the integrity of the Convention for its own sake and for the sake of other disarmament treaties which, no doubt, will be affected by the fate of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Efforts towards the elaboration of a verification mechanism, initiated in 1991, have so far progressed steadily in relation to the Biological Weapons Convention. In the last two years the Ad Hoc Group has succeeded in preparing much of the basic elements required for this purpose. This has brought us to a stage where we can move beyond identification and elaboration and pursue the work in the framework of negotiations.

For this, we need a rolling text which we should prepare this year. We also need to adjust our working methods. The modality adopted at the CTBT negotiations can, in our view, be properly applied here by creating two working groups, one on verification, which will deal with declarations, on-site measures, technological cooperation and transfer guidelines in accordance with the mandate, and the other on legal and organizational issues.

These steps, we believe, can elevate the current level of discussions to a new plateau and pave the way towards a successful conclusion of our work.

The pressing issue on the other hand, in this area, is the ban on the use of biological weapons. The exigencies of the cold war and prevalence of confrontational military doctrines at the time of the negotiation of the Convention did not allow the BWC to include a ban on the use of these barbaric weapons alongside the ban on their development, production and stockpiling.

The Biological Weapons Convention does, of course, render their use unlikely and perhaps impractical. The treaty has also been interpreted, by consensus, as banning implicitly the use of biological weapons. But this is too serious a matter to be left with any loopholes, particularly as some countries continue to maintain their reservations to the 1925 Geneva Protocol. The ban on use needs to be explicit and legally binding.

The proposal to amend the Convention to include a ban on the use of biological weapons received wide support during the last BWC Review Conference. The Conference could indeed make a decision to include simple amendments to the title and first article of the Convention. Yet, in order to ensure that the depositaries could bring the proposed amendments to the attention of all parties to the Convention, the Conference decided to solicit the views of States parties through formal correspondence by the depositaries.

Hence, the States parties are expected to inform the depositaries of their positions on the proposed amendments in writing and on the convening of a conference to adopt the decision. We hope that these procedures will be followed quickly in order to avoid any undue delay on this important issue. We have requested the depositaries to communicate with the States parties and seek their specific positions and we hope that the parties will respond at the earliest possible time.

NPT 2000 is the first review conference following the indefinite extension of the Treaty. The Conference will not only review the operation of the Treaty but will also examine how effectively each and every provision included in the consensus document of "Principles and objectives" has been observed and acted upon.

With the CTBT already in place other elements such as universality, cut-off, NSA, nuclear-weapon-free zones, safeguards and compliance, peaceful use, export controls and, of course, nuclear disarmament set the benchmarks to assess faithful implementation of the Treaty. Preparations for the Conference during the next three years would have to move quickly past procedural matters on to substantive issues.

Removing the whole stockpile of nuclear weapons has remained the predominant objective among all disarmament activities. Nuclear disarmament is not the private and exclusive domain for the two or five nuclear-weapon States. All States are concerned, are affected by its implications, have the right to be involved and should be able to exercise this right.

Various studies from respectable independent sources have concluded that adoption of a phased programme for nuclear disarmament with a timetable is feasible. Some have suggested specific programmes. The paper presented to the Conference by 28 States last year also presents a series of measures which will lead to nuclear disarmament within three time-bound phases.

Prohibition of use, in this context, should particularly be subject to early consideration. With the end of the cold war, no justifiable arguments could be raised in favour of the use of nuclear weapons under any perceivable circumstances. Development of a protocol similar to that of the 1925 Geneva Protocol on chemical weapons and biological weapons should not require exhaustive work or extensive negotiations. This is one important and real step that we can quickly embark upon.

It seems more difficult on the other hand to pursue efforts at the global level in the area of conventional disarmament. The prevailing practices have primarily been based on regional approaches, some of which have been successful and could serve as models for others.

Transparency in armaments tends, in part, to deal with aspects of conventional disarmament which can be negotiated internationally. Transparency will be an essential element of any measures in conventional disarmament just as it is for weapons of mass destruction. The functioning of the United Nations register will be reviewed this year. We hope that we can agree soon on how to contribute to this review and how to proceed on other interrelated aspects of the issue.

Attention has been focused in recent years on the tragic sufferings of civilians from anti-personnel landmines. There seems to be a growing mood that what has been accomplished in the context of the CCW negotiations is not sufficient. This is a humanitarian issue and will remain so at all times. Yet elimination of anti-personnel landmines is not a simple task and will not come about overnight. A major issue at hand is how to deal with over 120 million mines already laid under the ground. It will require a firm, solid and binding commitment by all States before one could even hope that the vast number of mines be cleared within decades.

At the same time a large number of countries consider the military aspects of landmines as indispensable and are not prepared or able to do away with these weapons without suitable alternatives in place. The disarmament aspects of anti-personnel landmines therefore prevail in further negotiations in the area.

The Conference should in principle be able to deal with all the issues relevant to its mandate. This means that no issue should be discarded except if it is dealt with extensively elsewhere within other international structures specifically established for that purpose. This is a basic, logical approach that we should adopt in considering the agenda of the Conference.

If, on the other hand, we decide to choose and select on what has priority and what has not, what is feasible and what is not and what may or may not be ripe for negotiations we are bound to be entangled, once again, in lengthy discussions which we all agree are wasteful for the Conference and the time and resources allocated to it. It is true that some issues have gone through more conceptual, technical and political preparations. But this does not mean that others should be excluded. It can only mean that they too have to be brought and maintained under focus to reach the same levels of preparations and to move beyond.

We are thankful to Mr. Petrovsky and the President for their attempts to propose a balanced agenda that includes the most significant issues that have been of interest to the members of the Conference and to the international community. If we keep an open mind devoid of unbridled selectivity, it is not hard to realize that every one of them is feasible, every one is a priority and every one is ripe for negotiations. I hope we can all make a real and sincere effort to agree on the agenda and organization of work of the Conference and start the actual work real soon.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador Nasseri for his statement and the kind words he addressed to the Chair. That concludes my list of speakers for today. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor at this stage?

As I announced at the beginning of this plenary meeting, I should now like to take up for decision the requests from Saudi Arabia, the Philippines, Jordan and Swaziland to participate, as observers, in the work of the CD during 1997. These requests are before you under a covering note from the President in document CD/WP.481. May I take it that the Conference agrees to these requests?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: The next plenary meeting will be held on Thursday, 6 February at 10 a.m.

Before adjourning this meeting, I should like to inform you that we shall start the series of informal plenary meetings devoted to the agenda and organization of work for the current session this afternoon at 3.30 sharp in this room.

The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.754
6 February 1997

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE SEVEN HUNDRED AND FIFTY-FOURTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday 6 February 1997, at 10 a.m.

President:	Mr. Sun	(Republic of Korea)

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 754th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament

I have on my list of speakers for today the representatives of Spain, the Syrian Arab Republic and Canada.

Before giving the floor to our first speaker today, I should like to inform you that the United Republic of Tanzania has requested participation in our work during this session as an observer. With your concurrence I should like to take up this request for decision at the end of this plenary meeting, without going into an informal meeting.

I now give the floor to the representative of Spain, Ambassador Martínez Morcillo.

Mr. MARTINEZ MORCILLO (Spain) (translated from Spanish): Mr. President, I would like my first words to convey to you our congratulations and our pleasure at seeing you guiding this Conference on Disarmament. The meetings that have been held since the Conference resumed its work just a few weeks ago have more than adequately confirmed your gifts as an energetic leader of our work with impartiality and skill. The delegation of Spain also wishes to convey its greetings and esteem to the Secretary-General of the Conference, Mr. Petrovsky. We also wish to place on record the appreciation with which we are following the work of the Deputy Secretary-General, Mr. Bensmail, and to extend our gratitude and appreciation to him.

Once again in its history, the Conference on Disarmament is at a crossroads which calls for a decision of fundamental importance for its future. In recent years the Conference on Disarmament has concluded the negotiation of two basic instruments in efforts to combat weapons of mass destruction, chemical weapons and nuclear weapons. We think that with such achievements behind it, the Conference must of necessity face its future with the twin approach of pursuing a line of action on which it has already embarked and adding to it in the light of the elements that it has before it and the international circumstances in which it is placed. The fact that Spain has joined the Conference on Disarmament only recently, and that it has done so at a time when the Conference must chart a new course, offers grounds for me to outline very briefly the main elements which will serve as a foundation for of our participation in the work of the Conference, and hence our policies within it. We have always proceeded from a delimitation of the Conference on Disarmament, but the fact that this has been repeated and reiterated so many times in this Francisco de Vitoria chamber, where we are now, which is a source of pride and encouragement for Spain, does not detract from its status as a mandatory and indispensable starting-point for any political action in the ambit of the CD.

The Conference, as has been said many times, is the sole negotiating body on disarmament issues that exists in the institutional context of the United Nations. For us this means two things: first of all, that it is a negotiating body, and therefore its cardinal objective is to negotiate specific legal instruments; second, that these negotiations are conducted in the institutional framework of the United Nations, thereby respecting the deliberative or decision-taking functions that in normal circumstances are carried out in other United Nations bodies. It was the make-up of the Conference on Disarmament, thus defined and demarcated, which led Spain to knock at its doors for very many years, doing so with patience but also with stubborn determination. The same definition and context continue to underlie Spain's position at the current stage in the Conference's proceedings. Therefore, Sir, my delegation welcomes the decision you took to initiate the holding of informal plenaries with a view to reaching agreements for the establishment of ad hoc committees that can get down to work on specific subjects. Therefore, my delegation also welcomes your decision to pursue these consultations and your work in the shape of the informal plenaries that we will be initiating today.

The position of my delegation as we put flesh on the bones of the agreement is the following. We proceed from the view that the Conference on Disarmament, within the context of a balanced approach to the realities and the pressing issues of the present international political moment, must devote its attention both to conventional weapons and to weapons of mass destruction. With regard to the latter, for my delegation there is a subject to which it attaches priority and which we believe is in keeping with the present stage of nuclear disarmament in the path to general and complete disarmament. Nevertheless, as the process of reduction and control of nuclear weapons has shown, their elimination cannot be achieved by means of maximalist positions and the establishment of rigid deadlines, but rather through specific steps and measures that, in a cumulative way, involve major qualitative changes in the progressive elimination of nuclear weapons. Any other strategy, we believe, is doomed to failure. Consequently, we must address the nuclear issue so that it will bear fruit in "realistic" terms, acknowledging that it is a process that will necessarily unfold in stages.

The Conference on Disarmament has just concluded the negotiation of the Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, so that the logical consequence of the momentum that has been launched is that the next, complementary step will necessarily be negotiations on a treaty for the prohibition of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, in other words, what is known in our jargon as the "fiss ban" or "cut-off". If the negotiation of such a treaty is the logical consequence of the fact that the process for the signature and ratification of the Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty has been initiated, the preference that we attach to it is recommended or even imposed by the fact that this Conference has already managed to agree on a mandate in this area and that all that is needed is for the appropriate ad hoc committee to be set up. We are not unaware of the fact that the negotiation of a treaty of this nature is going to be fraught with difficulties, and the proof of this lies in the difficulties that have already arisen, which prevented the establishment of the ad hoc committee in the past. But equally I believe that no one can be unaware that the signing of the Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty would somehow be incomplete if we do not seek to create a legal instrument that would solve one of the problems that in the natural course of events is going to crop up sooner or later, a problem that has already arisen in the International Atomic Energy Agency in connection with the possession of surplus fissile material.

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A moment ago we spoke of realism in opting for a subject that is ready for negotiation by this Conference. The end of the cold war in nuclear matters has created many new problems which have arisen with inevitability and for which urgent solutions are needed. They include for instance, the security of power plants, illicit trafficking in nuclear material, the strengthening of the safeguards system, etc. Each of these is being dealt with in the appropriate forum. Spain is of the view that the prohibition of fissile material, because of the characteristics of the subject, should be a question to be considered, as a matter of the highest priority, in the Conference on Disarmament.

With regard to conventional weapons, my delegation also has a very clear priority: anti-personnel landmines. We do not believe it is necessary to dwell in great detail on reiterating Spanish policy in this matter, which has focused on three elements: the commitment to join in efforts leading to the prohibition of such weapons, a commitment which is currently taking the form of our associating ourselves with the most recent steps taken by the international community in this regard, for which purpose the procedures have already been initiated in Spain for the signature and ratification of Protocols II and IV to the 1980 Inhumane Weapons Convention which were adopted at the end of 1995; secondly, the moratorium on the export of anti-personnel landmines, where Spain has always been in the forefront of national decisions taken in this respect, and which is currently being incorporated in the terms of the most recent joint action agreed upon by the European Union; and lastly, the twofold contribution to mine clearance efforts that Spain is making through its participation in the European Union's activities and its bilateral training programmes in clearance.

The question has been raised before this Conference on Disarmament of whether or not it is this body that should initiate negotiations on this subject in view of the initiatives already adopted outside this forum. Up until now the reasons in favour of one or the other solution have been presented many times and in many places, and specifically before this Conference. Needless to say, my delegation concurs with those delegations that support the Conference as the appropriate place for negotiations in the sphere of mines. But the most curious thing is that when we hear the arguments against this Conference and in favour of other processes that have already been initiated, while sharing many of the concerns expressed in them, we reach the conclusion that those reasons combine to argue in favour of choosing this Conference on Disarmament. And this is the case in view of the three indispensable conditions which we believe should be met if we wish international action in this area to be effective. These conditions, which we may with to enlarge upon later in greater detail, are those of verification, phasing and universality. Only a step forward which is based on the requirements of universality and implementation of the final objectives sought in successive and progressive phases currently enjoys the necessary guarantees for arriving at results which are effective and genuine, and - I wish to add - universal and general in scope. It is precisely this requirement of universality, which is the fundamental argument in favour of this Conference on Disarmament, that prompts us to adopt an equally clear position on another of the items that the Conference has before it. I refer to the possible further expansion of its membership.

The fact that Spain had to wait patiently for many years, in circumstances that were not always easy, before its membership of the Conference became a reality, means that we are especially alive to the interests of other countries which have made such a request. Therefore, and regardless of the decisions that may be adopted at some stage with regard to the expansion issue, we also support the idea that observer delegations that have expressed a wish to join in the work of the Conference should be able to participate in it in one way or another. In that way the Conference on Disarmament would meet the requirement of universal representativeness that its own nature demands.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Spain for his statement and for the encouraging remarks addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic, Mr. Orfi.

Mr. ORFI (Syrian Arab Republic) (translated from Arabic): Mr. President, it gives me pleasure at the outset to congratulate you on behalf of the delegation of the Syrian Arab Republic on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference at the start of the 1997 session. We are convinced that your diplomatic skills and experience will assist us greatly at this difficult stage. It also gives me pleasure to thank your predecessor, Ambassador Dembinski, who presided over our work during the final part of the previous session.

Since the end of the Second World War and the appearance of the spectre of the cold war, the world has lived under the shadow of terror of nuclear war after it witnessed the historically unprecedented scale of the tragedy which afflicted the two cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Nuclear terror once again took hold of the world during the missile crisis and after the Chernobyl tragedy. After the end of the cold war, hope was born but did not come to fruition. The hope was that the world had entered a new phase of its history; a phase in which the logic of justice and peace would prevail over the logic of hegemony and war and in which States would be guided by the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, which stipulated that all Members of the Organization would refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State. The peoples of the world were also optimistic that the new phase of their history would be the one which would witness the total elimination of all kinds of weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons. Despite the fact that the probability of the occurrence of a nuclear confrontation has now diminished, the nuclear threat, regionally and globally, still exists and still threatens the future of mankind. This threat will not be completely dissipated unless it is dealt with in a serious and comprehensive manner.

Syria believes that issues of disarmament must be addressed in a comprehensive and equitable manner. Syria also believes that all the steps which have been taken in the field of disarmament will not attain the desired goals unless comprehensive nuclear disarmament is achieved. Syria has therefore endorsed the programme of work on the elimination of nuclear weapons which was submitted by 28 member States of the Group of 21 in August last year. This programme is both objective and comprehensive. It achieves the objective of the peoples of the world to live in a world free of nuclear weapons. One of the priorities of the programme is the early adoption of a binding international instrument which provides unconditional and legally binding safeguards for all the Member States which do not possess nuclear weapons in order to protect them against the use or the threat of use of nuclear weapons.

The advisory opinion issued by the International Court of Justice on 8 July 1996 considered that the threat or use of nuclear weapons is contrary to the rules of international law applicable in armed conflict, and in particular the principles and rules of humanitarian law, and that all States have an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under effective control. Therefore, we are of the opinion that the Conference on Disarmament must respond to the request made by the United Nations General Assembly in resolution 51/45 0 for the establishment, on a priority basis, of an ad hoc committee to commence negotiations on a phased programme of nuclear disarmament and for the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons within a time-bound framework in the manner advocated in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly on disarmament and in accordance with the programme that was submitted by the Group of 21 in document CD/1419. In this respect, we would like to voice our concern at the mounting constraints imposed on the acquisition of the material, equipment and technology that developing countries need in order to be able to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. These constraints are imposed through the imposition of an export monitoring system which hampers economic and social development in developing countries. We believe that we must devise mechanisms to allow the transfer of technology and cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

Although we feel great pain when we see the human suffering caused by anti-personnel landmines in some parts of the world where those mines have been misused, for many States those mines are still a legitimate weapon to defend their security and their borders in the face of more lethal weapons. Hence, we have the right to ask the following question: What is the issue to which priority should be accorded in the Conference on Disarmament? Is it the question of the mines which have caused the deaths of thousands of people, or is it the nuclear weapons which the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice regarded as having a destructive power that cannot be contained in either space or time because nuclear weapons have the potential to destroy all civilization and the entire ecosystem of the planet?

One of the hotbeds of tension in the world is the Middle East. Of all the regions, the Middle East could possibly be said to be the most tense. When the Madrid Conference was held, the predominant hope among the Arab States in the Middle East was that the future would be better than the past; a future in which occupied lands would be restored to their rightful owners, a future in which a just and comprehensive peace would prevail instead of aggression and of war. However, approximately six years after the Madrid Conference, this hope is fading. Israel is still refusing to withdraw from all the Arab territories which it occupied in 1967 and is still refusing to apply the relevant Security Council resolutions and the principle of land for peace which formed the basis of the Madrid Conference. Furthermore, the peace process on both the Lebanese and the Syrian tracks has been frozen for almost one year because of the fact that the Government of Israel has reneged on the commitments and pledges that it made during the negotiations which were held with the previous Government. Those commitments are necessary for the resumption of negotiations in order to reach a just and comprehensive peace under which Israel would withdraw from the occupied Syrian Golan to the 4 June 1967 borders in accordance with the United Nations resolutions and the principles on which the Madrid Conference was based, and also from occupied southern Lebanon and the western Bekaa under the terms of Security Council resolution 425. We would like to recall in this respect that His Excellency President Hafez al-Assad of Syria has stated that, for Syria, peace is a strategic option the achievement of which depends on the Israeli party's commitment to international law.

Matters are becoming even more complex and tense in the Middle East due to the fact that Israel, which is the only State that possesses nuclear weapons in our region, is insisting on retaining its nuclear arsenal. In this respect we would like to voice our deep concern at the continuation of the Israeli nuclear programme outside the international non-proliferation system and at Israel's refusal to accede to the NPT or to place its nuclear installations under full IAEA safeguards in spite of the numerous United Nations resolutions calling on Israel to do so. This refusal on the part of Israel poses a threat to regional security, undermines the credibility and universality of the Non-Proliferation Treaty and constitutes a grave and unacceptable imbalance that jeopardizes the security and stability of our region. In this connection, I would like to point out that the fact that some have been supporting the illogical Israeli pretexts to justify non-accession to the Non-Proliferation Treaty is not helping to solve the nuclear problem in the Middle East; on the contrary, it is making the problem more complex. It is strange that Israel is being given gratuitous pretexts in order to be able to retain its nuclear weapons while there is an uproar when any Arab State acquires or even tries to acquire legitimate conventional weapons in order to defend its security and territorial integrity in accordance with the terms of the United Nations Charter.

The Syrian Arab Republic has always made every endeavour to support the relevant United Nations resolutions concerning disarmament in keeping with the principle of strengthening international peace and security throughout the world in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, in particular the need to refrain from using force or the threat of force and the need to respect the independence and territorial integrity of States and the right of peoples to self-determination and freedom from foreign occupation. In this context, and within the general perspective of full and comprehensive disarmament, Syria was one of the first States to accede to the Non-Proliferation Treaty and, in 1992, signed its safeguards agreement. It has repeatedly expressed its support for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. Syria was also the first country to officially propose, in the Paris Conference on Chemical Weapons in 1989, that the Middle East should become a zone free from all chemical, biological and nuclear weapons of mass destruction. Syria will do its utmost at the Conference on Disarmament to address questions of disarmament, particularly the question of nuclear disarmament, in order to provide coming generations with a world in which peace and justice will prevail, in which stability and prosperity will be enjoyed by all, and in which peoples will forget that dark period in history when mankind lived under the nuclear terror.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Canada, Ambassador Moher.

Mr. MOHER (Canada): Mr. President, it is a pleasure to participate in our deliberations once again under your skilful presidency. I would like to make, if I may, one or two preliminary comments before I address landmines in particular. We, on 21 January, gave our initial comprehensive statement on the issues before this body and we sincerely applaud and support your efforts to build on those and other views in the intervening days.

On Tuesday, we commented further on cluster 1, "Nuclear weapons", and during that intervention repeated our view that a mechanism or mechanisms to deal realistically and substantively with nuclear disarmament issues and to negotiate fissile material "cut-off" on the basis of the Shannon report will be necessary to break the log-jam in our efforts to find a realistic work programme in 1997. We firmly believe that certain key countries will have to agree to find a compromise in that regard and we encourage you, Mr. President, to continue your diligent efforts and we certainly welcome other creative, positive ideas to move us forward to that end. This is not just an effort on our part to find some kind of mindless compromise: it is our national view that nuclear disarmament issues should, and can, be considered substantively in this forum.

On Tuesday, we signalled that we would have comments on the other focus issue emerging in our deliberations, that is, anti-personnel landmines. Given that a proposal was made in the formal plenary on 30 January, we wish now to address this subject in more detail. As indicated, we made our views known on the general issue of anti-personnel mines in the Conference on Disarmament in our statement on 21 January. Those views stand.

Several developments, both in the CD and on the margins thereof, suggest however that some further comments at this point are in order.

Canada's starting-point on this issue is well established; that is, AP mines constitute a humanitarian and economic scourge with thousands of innocents killed and maimed each year.

In our view, use is the problem and it is the use of AP mines which must be urgently addressed.

As the International Committee of the Red Cross study on the military utility of AP mines concluded, in modern conflicts, mines have rarely been used correctly, whether by "developed" country armies, third world armies or insurgents.

Thus Canada has set itself a straightforward objective: a legally binding agreement in 1997 to ban the production, stockpiling, transfer and, particularly, the use of AP mines.

We are working diligently with others to that end and have invited all who can to join us in a mechanism - the so-called Ottawa Process - designed to attract as much support as possible.

We, and a growing number of countries from every region, are committed to this "fast-track" approach. Work on this track will begin within a week from now in Vienna and will proceed without interruption until a successful conclusion later this year.

Let me now turn to the CD as a forum for dealing with this issue.

We acknowledge those who wish to pursue the AP mine issue in the CD; we acknowledge that the CD has unique strengths and capabilities; but we reject any suggestion that it is the only acceptable mechanism in which to work.

Moreover, we have made clear our sole criterion as regards any APM work to be done in the CD, i.e. that it be complementary to, and mutually reinforcing of, the Ottawa Process.

At the United Nations General Assembly in December 1996, 156 countries called on the international community to "pursue vigorously an effective, legally binding international agreement to ban the use, stockpiling, production and transfer of anti-personnel mines with a view to completing the negotiations as soon as possible".

The United Nations General Assembly resolution did not specify the forum. It also did not require that the agreement be "universal". While our ultimate objective is universality, we recognize that this goal is not immediately achievable. Our first priority is to set a new international norm against these weapons. Once this is established, we will set about the task of promoting its universality.

The United Nations General Assembly resolution also did not specify that the agreement be "effectively verifiable". This is because there is a widespread recognition that, in the case of AP mines, complete verifiability is neither achievable nor necessary.

Further, we do not believe that a lengthy step-by-step approach, beginning with a ban on transfers, responds to the humanitarian urgency which impelled 156 countries to vote for a resolution calling for a total ban.

Transfers of AP mines have already been dramatically reduced over the past several years through unilateral action by approximately 70 States.

There are almost 100 million AP mines in national stockpiles and most nations have the rudimentary technology necessary to produce such mines. As a result, even with a ban on transfers, tens of millions of new mines can continue to be deployed.

This brings us to the proposal by the delegation of the United Kingdom in this plenary on 30 January.

Let us be absolutely clear: if other members of the CD wish to establish and direct an ad hoc committee to negotiate an effective, legally binding international agreement to ban totally the export, import or transfer of all types of APMs, Canada will not object.

And, if other members of the CD conclude that such a specific agreement to be negotiated here must have an even more inclusive scope, we are prepared to discuss that although we must admit to considerable reservations as to achievability.

But, what we must emphasize is that we have major difficulty in accepting the packaging of that core idea as presented in the United Kingdom proposal; additional elements therein are, in our view, designed to advance a particular perspective as regards the broader substance, process and priorities of addressing the APM issue which is counter to our views as already set out.

In conclusion, let me make two points: if it is the will of this body to pursue the issue of AP mines, Canada will not oppose it; but we will strongly oppose any initiative which does not reinforce or complement the ongoing work of the Ottawa Process or which delays unduly the establishment of the urgently needed norm against AP mines.

As Canada's Foreign Minister, Lloyd Axworthy, said on 31 January:

> "I have made the campaign against AP mines one of my top priorities ... It is my belief that the value of the Ottawa Process will speak for itself: a flexible, open and effective process that delivers concrete and speedy results. A process that holds out real hope for banning these weapons within months, not years or decades. A process that responds to the humanitarian imperative for action".

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador Moher of Canada for his statement. This concludes my list of speakers for today.

As I informed you at the beginning of this meeting, I shall now take up for decision the request for participation in our work during 1997 received from the United Republic of Tanzania. This request is contained in document CD/WP.482, which is before you. May I take it that the Conference agrees to this request?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: Before adjourning this meeting, I should like to inform you that I intend to convene, in 15 minutes' time, an open-ended Presidential consultation in this room with simultaneous interpretation. You may recall that, at the end of the second informal plenary held on Tuesday, 4 February, I made known my intention to convene Presidential consultations in room I for the purpose of having more focused and more intensive discussions on the selected items which emerged as the items having received the most attention during the course of the two informal plenaries, namely: fissile material cut-off, nuclear disarmament, anti-personnel landmines and, of course, any other items as appropriate; and also the draft annual agenda for 1997 *per se*. As for the venue of such open-ended Presidential consultations, reflecting the request from some delegations for the provision of interpretation, I decided to use this Council Chamber with the simultaneous interpretation provided. As I informed all delegations through the group coordinators who participated in the Presidential consultations yesterday afternoon, I intend to hold three consecutive sessions of open-ended Presidential consultations, each of which will be devoted to a fissile ban convention, nuclear disarmament, anti-personnel landmines and other items as appropriate. This morning's session, which will start in 15 minutes' time, will be devoted to discussing the fissile ban treaty. A second session, to be held at 10 a.m. on Tuesday 11 February, will be devoted to discussions on nuclear disarmament. A third session, to be held at 3 p.m. on the same Tuesday, will be devoted to anti-personnel landmines and, time permitting, the third session will also be devoted to other items as appropriate and the agenda *per se*. Of course, the planned three sessions may be extended or reduced depending on the time consumed by the discussions. At the end of such open-ended Presidential consultations, depending on and on the basis of the outcome of such consultations, I hope I will be in a position to propose the next course of action for the Conference on Disarmament.

Having said this, I now give the floor to Ambassador de Icaza of Mexico.

Mr. de ICAZA (Mexico) (translated from Spanish): My delegation is grateful to you, Mr. President, for the efforts you are making so that we can organize our work and reach agreement on the agenda. My delegation naturally supports the President in his efforts to organize whatever consultations he wishes to conduct. However, my delegation does not consider that the question of mines has been agreed as an appropriate subject for discussion in the Conference on Disarmament or negotiated, and if there is to be a special meeting of any consultative machinery on this subject, my delegation will not participate. Mines have no role to play here.

Mr. AKRAM (Pakistan): My delegation fully concurs with your desire to accelerate the work of the Conference so that we can get down to substantive negotiations on agreed subjects in the very near future. However, I must confess that the proposal which you have presented this morning for a schedule of work in informal consultations by the President is a procedure which we have not been officially informed of and which, we believe, would require the concurrence of the Conference before we can proceed along the lines that have been proposed.

In the informal meetings of the plenary which have been held over the past week, it was pointed out, if I recall correctly, by the Ambassador of the Russian Federation that we must adhere to the rules of procedure with regard to the adoption of the agenda and the work programme of this Conference. He had drawn attention to rules 27, 28 and 29, which relate to the adoption of the annual agenda and work programme of the Conference on Disarmament. Yesterday, the Group of 21 met, considered the situation and authorized its coordinator to convey to you, Mr. President, the position of the Group. I believe that position was conveyed to you in the Presidential consultations. So far, we have not been informed by the Group Coordinator of the results of the consultations held by you yesterday. I believe that the appropriate procedure would be that group coordinators report to the groups, for the groups to consider your proposal, for the evolution of a consensus on the process that we will follow and thereafter we can go into the agreed process.

As far as my delegation is concerned, I would submit that the correct procedure would be, firstly, to agree on the annual agenda of the Conference and, once we have agreed on the annual agenda, we can then go on to try and identify what are the subjects on which negotiations can be convened this year. My delegation, for one, attaches importance, firstly, to nuclear disarmament; secondly, to negative security assurances; and, thirdly, to regional conventional disarmament. These are the three issues on which we have made specific proposals. We would like to see these discussed. I have no problems in discussing any other issue, since my delegation has taken clear and categorical positions on each of the subjects that have been proposed. But I believe that we must proceed in accordance with our rules of procedure and the rules are very clear. Let us first adopt our agenda and thereafter look at the work programme. And this must be done with the concurrence of this Conference.

Mr. ZAHRAN (Egypt) (translated from Arabic): Mr. President, I would like to assure you of our total cooperation with you so that we can start our work in a manner which will enable us to speed up the discussion of the various subjects which enjoy priority at the CD. During the informal consultations, the delegation of Egypt had previously mentioned the fact that, in accordance with the rules of procedure, it would be preferable for the agenda to be adopted first. The delegation of Egypt had also pointed out that it would be possible to take into account the previous agenda which was reflected in the report of the Conference on Disarmament while deleting the first item which relates to the nuclear test ban, adding to this agenda any new item that enjoyed consensus and inserting nuclear disarmament as a separate item. Any new item that enjoyed consensus would not meet with our opposition. Following the adoption of the agenda, we could start discussing the programme of work and the priorities which should be set for the CD as regards the negotiations which are to take place during this session. While saying this, we also welcome your proposal to hold extended consultations although we had hoped to be able to discuss this within the framework of the regional groups and the Group of 21. I agree with my colleague, His Excellency Ambassador Munir Akram, that we have not yet been informed of what happened in the Presidential consultations yesterday.

In principle, the delegation of Egypt has no reservations concerning your proposal to hold consultations on the items to which you have referred. We have reservations only as regards separating the item on the prohibition of the production of fissile material and the item on nuclear disarmament. We consider that this item is a sub-item of nuclear disarmament; in other words the "fiss ban" or "cut-off" (prohibition of the production of fissile materials) could be discussed as a sub-item of nuclear disarmament. The same applies to nuclear security assurances, the prevention of nuclear war and the nuclear arms race. All these are considered as sub-items, particularly as the decision on "Principles and objectives" which was adopted by the NPT Review and Extension Conference referred to the prohibition of the production of fissile material as one of the items which should be discussed within the framework of nuclear disarmament. It also mentioned the fact that security assurances for non-nuclear States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons should be the subject of negotiations within the framework of a multilateral and legally binding international instrument. I am saying this because it falls within the framework of nuclear disarmament and the best assurance for non-nuclear States is that we should be able to live in a world which is free of nuclear weapons. When we have achieved this objective, we will not need to negotiate a convention to provide the necessary assurances for non-nuclear States. This is what I wanted to emphasize, Mr. President. However, we are fully ready to cooperate with you within these limits and within this framework and trust that God will grant you success. We assure you of our cooperation.

Mrs. GHOSE (India): I am a little surprised that this discussion is taking place while the formal plenary is still open but, nevertheless, since you have opened the floor for comments, I would like to make two very brief points.

As has been pointed out by previous speakers, this is the first time that we have formally heard of your proposal. It is not, of course, the first time we have heard of your intention to conduct informal Presidential consultations, to which we agreed - that you would hold these consultations immediately after the plenary. We therefore would like to study it and discuss it. As the Ambassador of Pakistan pointed out, the Group of 21, which met yesterday, took a particular position. That position is something which I think is reflected in the interventions which have been made so far - to an extent. I think that the Group needs now to reconsider that you have adopted a new approach and we might very well agree with it. We may not have a problem with it. But I think in all fairness, the Group of 21, at least speaking for our own Group - I cannot speak for other groups - would need to hear from the Coordinator what exactly has been decided, what transpired at the Presidential consultations. And then we could move further. As I had occasion to say in the informal plenary, of paramount importance to us is the issue of nuclear disarmament. We have no problem with discussing any of the other items that are included in your list of 28 January, but I think that the priority which was set by all members of the Group of 21 on nuclear disarmament needs at least to be recognized. I would like to suggest, for your consideration, that once we adjourn the formal plenary perhaps the groups could be given a chance to meet and then we could reconvene at your informal Presidential consultations and continue, so that we have some time to discuss among ourselves what we are to do with a situation which does not in fact reflect what our positions were until yesterday. So I think that I would like to put this forward, not just for your consideration, but for the consideration of the Conference at large.

The PRESIDENT: Before giving the floor to several Ambassadors who have requested to speak, at this point I would like to intervene to clarify my position. I am not complaining of any group coordinator who participated in the Presidential consultations yesterday afternoon. But, from the beginning, I made it clear that I was intending to hold the open-ended Presidential consultations, and yesterday at the Presidential consultations I made it clear, at the beginning of that consultation, that it was my intention, within the authority given to the President, to decide the subjects for consultations and their timing. But as far as timing is concerned, I may be a little bit flexible. As far as I interpret the rules of procedure and other understandings regarding the authority of the President, it is his own decision to hold consultations on such items which have received the most attention. This is not an informal plenary, which is subject to agreement from the floor, in accordance with the rules of procedure - for example, rule 19 of the rules of procedure. These are Presidential consultations which would be open-ended. On the question of the annual agenda, we want, of course, to stick to the adoption of the agenda and work programme on the basis of the agenda, at the outset of the annual session. So the process of consensus-building on the annual agenda and work programme is still under way. But, I would like to appeal to all of you, even though I am flexible on the timing of the first open-ended Presidential consultations - please let me enjoy a part of the Presidential authority which by essence is limited.

I now give the floor to Ambassador Ledogar of the United States of America.

Mr. LEDOGAR (United States of America): Well, precisely, Mr. President. I distinctly heard you call, not just this morning but earlier in your term of office, for open-ended Presidential consultations, which I think is very much your right and your duty to pursue. They certainly would not be decision-taking meetings. Rule 22 of the rules of procedure is, I think, very clear. We are having some of the sea-lawyer's "rules" as reasons for not doing anything here this year. I would take a look at rule 22, saying that the Conference may hold informal meetings with or without experts to consider, as appropriate, substantive matters, etc. I find it curious that people say we have got to adopt an agenda first but we cannot talk about it. We must first adopt it and then maybe we can talk about it. It's just that there is no immediate consensus as to what the agenda would be. I think we have to talk about it and I think that is what I understand you are trying to do. Why should the rest of the Conference on Disarmament pay the price of delay at this important point in our work because of coordination problems within one group? Have we become so large and unwieldy that we must have a full week elapse between the time the President says something and the time that is transmitted to other members? What is the point of Wednesday meetings if it takes a full weeks' delay before anything can even be communicated?

As far as the remark that there is no consensus in this Conference on anti-personnel landmines, I would like to point out that there is no consensus in this Conference on what is called "nuclear disarmament". My delegation, among others, is opposed to the concept of the Conference on Disarmament doing "nuclear disarmament". I would not think for a minute of absenting myself from a meeting that you called on the subject, however, because I think that would be discourteous, disruptive and very impractical. So, of course, I would attend the session that you have indicated you would like to hold on the subject of nuclear disarmament.

Mr. WANG (China) (translated from Chinese): First of all, Mr. President, I would like to apologize to you. My delegation was originally not prepared to make a statement during this formal plenary. However, since my delegation was still waiting for instructions from home, we could not make use of the opportunity of the past two informal plenaries to make clear my delegation's position on the CD's agenda.

Before clarifying the position of my delegation, there is one point I would like to emphasize: the core or the principal provision in the procedure of the CD is the one on consensus. According to rule 22, the Conference may hold meetings of a different format. The subject in the sentence above is "the Conference". In other words, if rule 22 is strictly observed, it will be up to the Conference to decide whether meetings other than formal sessions are to be held.

With regard to the issue before us, my delegation has the following comments to make. First, we are not raising objections to the privileges or the authority of the President. With regard to the format of informal consultations proposed by the President, my delegation did not raise any objection either. However, I must point out that, during yesterday's group coordinators' consultations, we made it very clear that my delegation will not be able to agree to limiting our discussions to three topics only. We believe that the three topics have been chosen by the President himself. Besides, we do not think that the topic-by-topic approach is an effective way to solve the issue of the agenda. If the parties concerned have the genuine desire to let the CD begin its work this year promptly or expeditiously, then the rules of procedure must be observed. In other words, the agenda and the programme of work as well as the schedule of activities, including the organizational arrangements, must be solved together. Otherwise, even if we came to a kind of agreement on one or two items at this forum the CD would still not be able to start its work, because the procedural conditions have not been met.

On specific agenda items, my delegation's position is as follows: my delegation is of the view that the CD in 1997 should establish ad hoc committees on NSA as well as on the outer space issue. With regard to transparency in armaments, there will be no need to set up an ad hoc committee. We will have another occasion to elaborate our reasons. On the issue of landmines, my Government is still in the process of comprehensive deliberations. Pending the final decision of my Government on this issue, my delegation cannot commit itself in any way.

Mrs. BOURGOIS (France) (translated from French): Mr. President, I listened attentively to your suggestion and to the statements made by speakers taking the floor before me. Many of these statements are quite convincing. It is true that ideally it would be preferable to reach agreement on an agenda before embarking on the discussion of specific subjects. It is also true that it might be useful to consult with certain partners, once again before exchanging views on specific subjects. It is further true that not all of us necessarily have the same inclinations about the three subjects that you mentioned, while pointing out that they did not necessarily rule out others. Finally, it is also true that the concept of nuclear disarmament covers a large number of subjects, among them some of the subjects which were proposed for study here by certain delegations. Indeed, it is also true that they might also cover the idea of negotiating a treaty to prohibit fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear devices by definition. In short, I think that all the observations that have been made are based on a logical and rational approach to the situation. However, my delegation thinks that you have taken an excellent initiative, Mr. President.

Let us not delude ourselves. On the subject of procedure, there are many ways of interpreting procedure, and while it is true that we must adopt an agenda by consensus, it is also true that the President, particularly when he inherits such a difficult situation as the one you are now in, has the right to conduct consultations which are open to everybody, which means by the same token that those who do not want to participate do not have to. It is also true that we do like to consult our partners, but until further notice it is States and not groups that are members of the Conference on Disarmament. It is also true we may have to do more work before we commit ourselves to specific discussions, but my foible is to believe that the delegations which have gathered in this room have a sufficiently serious knowledge of the subjects you have mentioned to be able to agree to discuss them, obviously on condition that the discussions are informal and do not commit them to accept any given procedure or even any given substantive approach to which their country might ultimately not subscribe. Personally I think that the three subjects which you have mentioned - and which, I repeat, do not rule out others - have a great advantage in this deadlocked situation we are now in.

After listening to the various statements which have been made in plenary since we began our work, we can all observe - this is practically a statistical fact - that it is these three subjects which finally emerge from all these statements, highly varied though they have been. At the same time, we cannot say in the present circumstances, when we have more or less been laid off temporarily - I do not think it would be wrong for us to agree to spend a few hours, even in a rather impromptu way, in an exchange among ourselves without any report, without any summary records, without any commitment on our part, a discussion which, with luck, might at some point leave behind the language of official formulas. This is why, speaking for myself, and even if, as you have said, we might find a certain amount of flexibility with respect to timetables, if that is really the problem, my delegation is quite prepared to embark upon this exercise that you are proposing, particularly since the three subjects which have been mentioned have one point in common, which is that all three, to varying degrees, have had proposals made on them, whose status is of course different, because to take the two extremes between the status of the issue of the prohibition of the production of fissile material, which has already been the subject of a discussion in this forum, a report and a mandate agreed by consensus, and the new idea put forward by the British delegation as a national one, which my delegation supports, of an ad hoc committee with a mandate on anti-personnel landmines, there is indeed a difference in status, but it remains the case that we have on the table two types of preparatory work for our discussions, and the same is true with regard to the programme of action, about which, as you know, my delegation is not necessarily totally enthusiastic, but it is still prepared to enter discussions. At all events, I wish to thank you for the effort you are making to try to get our discussions out of the rut and to say to you that, as far as my delegation is concerned, and even if these informal conversations do not enable us to reach the point where the normal proceedings of our Conference can resume, we will participate with the greatest good will.

Mr. RAMAKER (Netherlands): Like others, Mr. President, I would like to thank you for your efforts to try and see how this Conference could move forward at the moment it has to decide what to focus on after the negotiations that are behind us. A couple of days ago, I think, you announced that after the plenary of today we would go into informal consultations under your guidance. We are still - and Ambassador Ghose reminded us a while ago - in the plenary and that is somewhat unusual. On the other hand, it gives the necessary transparency that, as you know, my delegation is so fond of. So, others can see what the real difficulties are, and what we are confronted with.

I think that when you, Mr. President, took it upon yourself to be the President of this Conference for this month, not only in accordance with the rules of procedure, but by common practice that has existed here for a long time, you were expected to consult. You were expected to consult on how we could agree on further work. You can do this in many ways, and you have been doing that during your tenure. You have been consulting bilaterally and you have now proposed to consult, groupwise as it were, in the entirety in open-ended informal consultations. And, that is entirely, as you said yourself, within your prerogative. In fact, it is more than that: it is asked of you, you are expected to do it. So, yesterday in the Presidential consultations, where I happened to be because I happen to be at this moment the Coordinator of the Western Group, you announced how you were going to further conduct your consultations. And, we, I think, said that we were in your hands. By definition no decision was taken and no decision is necessary.

Yesterday, for those who were not yet informed, as far as I am aware, no decision was taken because you simply gave us pre-information of what you actually announced today and which, if I understood it well, meant that we would set aside some time in a couple of mornings and afternoons to have informal consultations - open-ended, so everyone is free to come or not to come - on "cut-off", nuclear disarmament, on landmines and on other issues. And, as I understand it, there is also an interest to discuss other issues. I think that you have put this very wisely and very pragmatically because I think we have to have some clarity in our minds about what it is that we are talking about on each of these issues before we can agree on an agenda and work programme, which, indeed, is desirable. So, nothing of what you have proposed - and I hope that that is a misunderstanding that can be eliminated - contradicts any of the established procedures of the Conference.

I would like to encourage you to continue the consultations. I think we are in your hands at this moment. I don't think there should be any limitation on the subjects in these consultations. The ones you mentioned by name seem to be close to the hearts of many, but some other subjects are very dear to others. I heard the Ambassador of Pakistan say that he is particularly interested in the question of regional disarmament; I remember others saying 'Well, what does it really mean?" So I do not think that here we have to have some clarification on what it is that one has in mind before we can actually put it in an agenda. I do think we should understand these things, and I think we should be able to avoid misunderstandings. With regard to nuclear disarmament, I remember my colleague from Morocco, Ambassador Benjelloun-Touimi, saying a couple of days ago that nuclear disarmament means many things to many people, so probably there is some need to clarify what it is and what we have in mind when it comes to this subject in this forum. And therefore the only practical method, if you really want to move forward, is to go into the process of informal consultations and, of course, you will continue your bilateral consultations. As I said, you are expected to, but of course, you can also set aside time to have open-ended informal consultations, and if this or that delegation has an objection in principle - which would be surprising I think - it is, of course, free not to attend your consultations. I do think that you are on the right track and really there is nothing more I can think of to say. I wish you good luck in your consultation process and I am looking forward to it.

The PRESIDENT: I indeed thank Ambassador Ramaker for his encouraging words. I now give the floor to Ambassador de Icaza of Mexico.

Mr. de ICAZA (Mexico) (translated from Spanish): I apologize for taking the floor again, Mr. President. I am doing so because perhaps in my previous statement, when I was taken by surprise by the proposals you made, I spoke in categorical terms and this led some colleagues to understand that I intend to be discourteous. I wish to assure them that that is not my intention. I will not attend the consultations on mines next week, and I will not attend any others either, because I will not be in Geneva, I will be in Mexico in the first place. But in the proposal you are putting before us in this plenary, which is going to be placed on record, I perceive a difficulty.

You say that we are going to hold three open-ended Presidential consultations, three separate meetings, on specific subjects - on fissile material, on nuclear disarmament and on mines. I look at the procedural framework in which we operate and I see that rule 19 tells me that the arrangements for the work of the Conference must be agreed by the Conference, and in rule 22 I see that the Conference may hold informal meetings to consider substantive matters and the organization of work. I suppose this means substantive matters within the competence of the Conference. And you are making a procedural proposal that, if I remain silent, I automatically assent to work being carried out on three subjects. This obliges me to examine the three subjects, and I see that nuclear disarmament has been on our agenda for many years, and it is even in item 2 on last year's agenda. Of course I have no problem with holding an informal meeting to speak about something that has been on our agenda for a long time. And you tell us that the second meeting will be on fissile material, and there are documents of this Conference telling us that, in the past, there was institutional machinery on this topic; there is even a report dated 1995 that contains a draft mandate. I have no difficulty about holding informal, or formal, or whatever sort of consultations you like on a subject that the Conference has had on its agenda for a great deal of time. But you tell me that we are going to speak about mines in a special meeting, and I ask: Since when has this been on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament? And if this has never been on the Conference's agenda, then are we going to be compelled to accept it?

I support your efforts, Sir. If I am not mistaken, in the first informal plenary, it was I who suggested that there should be open-ended Presidential consultations. I have no difficulty with these consultations covering the agenda and the programme of work, but if it is to be placed on record that consultations are going to be held on specific items, let it be very clear that there is no consensus that mines are part of the Conference's agenda. If this is very clear, Sir, I am in your hands.

Sir Michael WESTON (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland): I simply wanted to join with those who had thanked you for your proposals, Mr. President, and congratulate you on your constructive and determined efforts to get this show on the road. I really find it incredible that anyone should deny the right of the President to hold consultations, and yet that seems to be what we are doing now.

Last year I think the President at the beginning of the year was the distinguished representative of Myanmar, and he held consultations with all members, and I think these were very useful, and it was the result of this work that we were able to proceed. Obviously, it is a bit more difficult this year inasmuch as we now have more members and it takes longer to consult them all individually, and therefore you proposed that you should take a short-cut, if you like, and hold informal consultations in room I. The situation, then, seems to have become confused because people started then to talk of meetings, and it was made worse because people suggested - the proposal, I think, was put forward by a cigar smoker who was confident that he could make even this room a smoke-filled one - the proposal was put forward that we should move in here. The proposal was also made that we should have interpretation, but this did not change the nature of the consultation. As Ambassador Ledogar said, no one was suggesting that these should be formal meetings, that they should be meetings where decisions could be taken. They were Presidential consultations and, as I say, I do not think anyone can deny your right to hold these. There seems to be objection to your saying that it is your impression, following the discussion that we have had, that there have been three subjects which have dominated that discussion.

A lot of delegations have said that we should set up an ad hoc committee, as we have agreed to do, on "cut-off". You have quite correctly said that there are a lot of delegations who think that nuclear disarmament should be a priority and, also, a lot of delegations who have talked of landmines. But you have not said that you will confine yourself in the consultations to these three subjects, and I think it has been quite clear, as the distinguished Ambassador of the Netherlands said, it would be possible if he wishes to bring back his predecessor and call for an ad hoc committee on radiological weapons, and there is nothing to prevent this either. You could also have said, and this was a point made by the distinguished Ambassador of France, that these are three subjects on which there have been specific proposals to create ad hoc committees. There has been a specific proposal to have an ad hoc committee on fissile material cut-off, there has been a specific proposal by the Group of 21 to set up an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament, and - I do not suggest that this has the same status - but there has been a Franco-British proposal for an ad hoc committee on anti-personnel landmines. And these, I think, are formal proposals. The objection has been that landmines is not even on the agenda. But, I mean, if one wishes to make a lot of this point, we could perfectly well say that it should be dealt with under agenda item 7, in the same way as it has been agreed that "cut-off" - which, again, is not mentioned by name on the agenda - should be dealt with under agenda item 2.

But I go back to my starting-point: surely no one denies your right to hold consultations. You have suggested that to save time you will consult us all jointly. You have agreed, for the convenience of delegations, that it will be in a large smoke-filled room. You have agreed, for the convenience of delegations, that interpretation will be provided. But all you have proposed is that in accordance with your responsibilities - not just your rights - in accordance with your responsibilities you should consult. I really think that this Conference has reached a new level of absurdity. We can't agree on our agenda, we can't agree our work programme, we can't agree to establish subsidiary bodies, and now we cannot agree to allow you to hold consultations.

Mr. AKRAM (Pakistan): I would submit to those of our colleagues who have spoken about absurdity that the simplest way to avoid absurdity is to stick to our rules of procedure. Those rules are absolutely clear, and if and so long as we adhere to our rules of procedure, we will not get lost. It is the effort to confuse clarity which is puzzling for my delegation. We are very clear. Let us agree on the agenda. It should not be difficult. We have an agenda from last year, we have a paper from you, Mr. President. What we have suggested is: let us agree on the agenda. Once we agree on that agenda, and we know which items are the ones that are to be taken up by this Conference in 1997, we will then be in a position to say how these items are to be dealt with, whether through the creation of ad hoc committees, special coordinators, or other mechanisms that are available to this Conference. We, in this process, should not be seeking to jump the gun. We have to agree on the agenda in accordance with rule 27. We then have to agree to set up negotiating mechanisms, that is, provide our work programme in accordance with rule 28. Those rules are clear. I do not believe that we should circumvent those rules.

We are not challenging the authority of the President to convene informal consultations. You had mentioned, as has been stated, you had mentioned that you would conduct informal consultations last week, but you had mentioned them in an informal meeting. When you bring this proposal into the plenary and announce that you will be conducting consultations which are devoted to three subjects, the question arises: Are those subjects on our agenda? And the answer is: not yet. They are not yet on our agenda. We have to agree to those subjects, and possibly others, to put them on our agenda, and once they are on our agenda we will then be in a position to consult, and to agree upon, the negotiating modalities on those issues. You cannot short-circuit the procedures that are provided for by our Conference's rules. That is the simple point that we are trying to make. We are not trying to be discourteous to you, Mr. President. We are not trying to delay the work. On the contrary, I believe it is those who wish to (as I said) confuse clarity who are delaying the work of this Conference. Let us not be confused. We know what we have to do. By all means do convene informal consultations, but please do not indicate here what the items for those consultations will be, because there are no items on the agenda of this Conference for 1997. That is a fact. So let us have informal consultations. Let us go into those informal consultations with an open mind, no pre-determined subjects. We will there discuss firstly our agenda, and then the modalities for our work, and our work programme. This is the submission we make. We are prepared to enter into informal consultations. We are not prepared at this stage to agree to some items and not to others.

Mr. NASSERI (Islamic Republic of Iran): Mr. President, as you and other colleagues who were present in the Presidential consultations may recall, when this proposal was suggested yesterday to hold consultations in the form that you have laid out today, we had some questions about the utility of the format that had been suggested and we were perhaps a bit apprehensive as to whether it would be useful to continue to discuss these various issues independently, in an informal setting, and whether this would not then prolong the discussions on the agenda and the work programme, whereas the spectrum of the views have already been established after formal and informal plenaries that we have had, and it is rather clear as to where the positions are that are more towards the ends of the spectrum. And would it not be more logical or feasible that we would try to concentrate on those areas, and to try to begin working on how we can find an agreement on grounds that will be, hopefully, in the middle of the spectrum or towards one or the other end?

Nevertheless, it was the President's view that this was the course that he intended to follow and he hoped, and I appreciated that he said it, in my view, in the most sincere way, that through this, the President could begin to perhaps find ways to look for an agreement.

In any case, just as I had apprehensions about the utility of the prolongation of these meetings in the forms that were suggested, I think today also I have apprehensions about the utility of the continuation of this discussion and debate here in the formal plenary. And I wonder whether it would not be perhaps better at this stage to suspend the meeting for 15 minutes and allow for some consultations and then come back to the formal plenary.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador Nasseri. Are there any other delegations wishing to take the floor? I thank you very much for the comments and remarks made by so many delegations around the table, which in my view are valid in one way or another. As Ambassador Nasseri has reminded me of the question he raised yesterday at the Presidential consultations, please allow me to react very briefly.

Yes, it is true that Ambassador Nasseri questioned the utility or effectiveness of having such informal Presidential consultations, and I answered that this was my plan under my own authority, but I did not want to prejudge the outcome of such informal Presidential consultations. Anyway, I did not intend to generate such a heated debate at the plenary on the plan I had made, and then I was intending to inform you of the plan I have set forth, of which I have already informed you through the coordinators of the groups. But, anyway, these were very useful discussions, and I would like to make it clear, once again, that from Tuesday onwards, I made it clear that while keeping the informal plenary process alive so that we may come back to it whenever a need arises, I should like to let you know that I was planning to have a series of informal, open-ended Presidential consultations.

Several delegations have referred to rules 19 and 22, regarding the conduct of the work of the Conference. I am talking about the authority of the President. As far as I understand it - as far as I interpret it - the President has the authority to conduct his own consultations, which may take the form of bilateral consultations, sometimes plurilateral consultations, or open-ended informal consultations. But it is a selection. I remember that the Ambassador from Pakistan mentioned that there is no agenda yet for the President to conduct informal consultations. But we are not talking about the formal agenda, which has not been adopted yet. I am talking about the Presidential informal consultations. But the selection of items I suggested was based upon my judgement, my assessment, on the frequency and density of the remarks and statements made by so many delegations on these three items. But I made it clear, once again, that the door is being kept open for any other items. Concerning the annual agenda: yes, I have been making every effort, being faithful to the rules of procedure, that at the outset of any annual session of the CD we are supposed to adopt the annual agenda and work programme. I made so many efforts, and then the process of pursuing a consensus on the annual agenda continues. If I borrow the Arabic expression,

(The President)

"The caravan marches on". Well, I think this is the situation. At the beginning of our discussion on this particular procedure, I said that I would be a little bit flexible on timing.

Having said all this, I suggest that the first informal open-ended Presidential consultations be held at 3.30 this afternoon in order that you will have some time to breathe over the lunch-time and, again, I remind you, these are open-ended informal Presidential consultations. So, such consultations will be devoted to the fissile material cut-off, and then another full session will be devoted to nuclear disarmament, and another one to landmines. We may extend or reduce the meetings, depending upon the time necessary for carrying out my informal Presidential consultations which will stay open-ended.

The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on Thursday, 13 February at 10.00 a.m.

The meeting rose at 12.15 p.m.

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.755
13 February 1997

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE SEVEN HUNDRED AND FIFTY-FIFTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on
Thursday, 13 February 1997, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Sun (Republic of Korea)

The President: I declare open the 755th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament. I have on my list of speakers for today the representatives of Brazil and Japan. I now give the floor to the representative of Brazil, Ambassador Lafer.

Mr. LAFER (Brazil): Mr. President, may I begin by expressing my delegation's gratitude for the work you have undertaken in this session of the Conference on Disarmament? Your firm determination and competent guidance have been instrumental to this phase of the Conference, when difficult issues are being confronted. Knowing you from other forums, and having had the benefit of discussing many issues with you, I know how competently you have worked at the issues we have before us.

As this is the first time that I take the floor in the current session of the Conference, I would also like to thank your predecessor, as well as to welcome the permanent representatives accredited since the conclusion of last year's session.

It comes as no major surprise that the CD began its 1997 session entangled, as it still is, in a debate over its agenda and programme of work. The report of the then Special Coordinator on the agenda, Ambassador Meghlaoui of Algeria, presented to this plenary last year, had already detected a general acceptance that "the CD should have a new, balanced agenda which can boldly reflect the changes that have taken place in the world over the last few years". But the report also clearly cautioned that "rather large differences remain between the priorities expressed by the various groups". It seems natural that members wish to ensure that a new agenda will adequately reflect their needs and priorities in the post-cold-war world before agreeing to supersede the 1978 "Decalogue". The subject should therefore continue to require active coordination.

In the meantime, we encourage the course of action you have been following: to concentrate on the Conference's programme of work by attempting to weave consensus around a number of points encompassing both nuclear and conventional disarmament. The idea of striking a balance between these two broad categories is of course not a new one and may provide a way out of the current impasse. The same balanced approach could in our view also apply to certain items being considered, such as transparency in armaments. But placing greater emphasis than hitherto on conventional disarmament by means of entering into actual negotiations to ban "weapons that are actually killing people", such as landmines, should not downgrade the priority conferred upon nuclear disarmament in the Conference's agenda. Nor should it serve to downplay the global risk still posed by the continued existence of nuclear weapons. In our view, ridding the world of the greatest threat ever posed to civilization remains the paramount task for this conference. It is a political and axiological hierarchy.

Throughout the 1996 session of the Conference, Brazil and many other States time and again called for a real commitment on the part of all nuclear-weapon States to engage in a multilateral process within this forum with a view to achieving the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. These calls took the form of reiterated proposals by the Group of 21 for the immediate establishment of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament, including a concrete programme of action by a number of countries, as contained in document CD/1419 of 7 August 1996. We of course regret the negative responses that these suggestions, which remain on the table, have so far elicited. Perhaps discussions on the overall programme of work may provide encouragement for viewing them, as well as possible variations, in a more positive light. To this end, it would be worthwhile to explore the idea of establishing one ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament under which separate working groups would take up issues such as the fissile materials convention and nuclear disarmament measures.

Surmounting these difficulties will certainly require perseverance and may take time, but the only way to preserve the CD's utility and credibility as a negotiating forum where all major players are represented is to allow for their opinions to be taken into account.

For more than a century, Brazil has been at peace with all its neighbours. We have renounced nuclear, biological, chemical and certain conventional weapons, our military expenditure ratio of GNP is among the lowest in the world. Credentials such as these incline us to encourage all serious proposals that may help others along the same paths, thus contributing to the global relaxation of tensions. In these endeavours, we are always guided by what President Fernando Henrique Cardoso terms "possible Utopias" in his efforts to confront and reduce the dauntingly complex Brazilian economic and social imbalances, which equally apply to the search for ways to deal with the most difficult international issues.

Brazil was at the forefront of the initiative which resulted in the adoption of resolution 51/45 B through which the United Nations General Assembly recognizes with satisfaction that nuclear-weapon-free-zone treaties are gradually freeing the entire southern Hemisphere from nuclear weapons. We see this as a natural consequence of the spread of nuclear-weapon-free zones throughout the southern Hemisphere, as well as a concrete contribution to nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament.

As a founding member of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which celebrates its thirtieth anniversary tomorrow, 14 February, and was the first to bar nuclear weapons from a populated area, Brazil is gratified to see the growing support of the concept of nuclear-weapon-free zones. One not too far-off day we hope the entire globe will be a nuclear-weapon-free zone.

Together with 115 other countries, Brazil was one of the co-sponsors of resolution 51/45 S, also approved at the fifty-first United Nations General Assembly. We are convinced that negotiations on an effective, legally binding instrument proscribing the use, stockpiling, production and transfer of anti-personnel landmines should start as soon as possible. We consider the CD, as the single multilateral disarmament negotiating body, to be the proper forum for the attainment of a universal and effective ban. We could accept an approach by phases, as has been proposed, which seems a course that could

(Mr. Lafer, Brazil)

yield early results. It is nevertheless our intention to continue to participate in the effort initiated in Ottawa last year, which could also play an important role in building political momentum for attaining the goal of a universal ban.

We have noted the importance many States attach to the early commencement of negotiations on a fissile materials production ban ("cut-off") treaty, an objective Brazil shares and supports. Should the Shannon mandate remain the basis for the establishment of an ad hoc committee, it is our expectation that the question of stocks will be dealt with within committee discussions on the scope of the future treaty. The reasons for this are twofold: first, how can a ban on fissile material production be effective without adequate knowledge and accountability of the amounts of such materials already in existence? Second, as was the case for the CTBT, the FMCT would be negotiated in a context where many nuclear-weapon States already have unilaterally stopped the activity intended for prohibition. If the future treaty is to have real impact beyond non-proliferation, and we hope it will, it would therefore also have to go beyond the narrow scope that some currently envisage for it. Another important issue from our point of view is to make sure that the costs of verification of such a treaty are carefully considered from the outset of the negotiation, as these should not unduly burden those States whose current international obligations in practice already subject them to the same prohibition envisaged under the future treaty.

Although Brazil has been doing its part to support and would welcome the start of negotiations in the CD on this subject, we cannot agree with views that seek to equate the eventual establishment of an FMCT ad hoc committee with actual CD work on nuclear disarmament, particularly given the current uncertainties regarding the scope of such a treaty.

We are also intrigued by assertions that conclusion of a fissile materials "cut-off" treaty should now take precedence over any multilateral nuclear disarmament discussion. In support of this, the "Principles and objectives" document approved during the NPT 1995 Review and Extension Conference is frequently cited. Reference is made to the sequential listing therein of three objectives under a "Nuclear disarmament" heading: the CTBT, the fissile materials convention, and "the determined pursuit by the nuclear-weapon States of systematic and progressive efforts to reduce nuclear weapons globally, with the ultimate goal of eliminating those weapons, and by all States of general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control.

It is certainly not our intention to offer an uncalled-for interpretation of what NPT parties agreed to, or did not agree to, in that text. But while concurrent progress for the first and second objectives was not only envisaged but repeatedly exhorted by many NPT parties throughout the CTBT negotiations, why doesn't the same reasoning apply when it comes to the second and third objectives? Does this mean that real multilateral advances towards the elimination of nuclear weapons are in effect being made contingent upon the prior attainment of the fissile materials production ban? And now, as we hear, also upon the additional encumbrance of waiting for the CTBT to enter into force? If so, those who are quick to denounce linkages need look no further.

Proposals aiming at concrete steps towards a world free from nuclear weapons are gathering interest and support from various quarters. The past year witnessed a growing and influential body of opinion in the world, including within some nuclear-weapon States, that increasingly questions the case for indefinite retention of nuclear arsenals.

In the post-cold-war world, how to justify to concerned citizens the maintenance and perfectioning of arsenals of colossal and indiscriminate destructive force? The lack of clarity in defining the putative military utility of nuclear weapons today, as well as their staggering cost, only add to the wariness with which many are approaching their own Governments' dubious arguments.

For their part, cases for questioning nuclear weapons on moral or legal grounds, long stifled by the major Powers, are again finding their rightful place at the centre of the debate. The advisory opinion issued by the International Court of Justice on 8 July 1996 on the legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons breaks new legal ground in clearly establishing that such actions "would generally be contrary to the rules of international law applicable in armed conflict, and in particular the principles and rules of humanitarian law". Moreover, in stressing that "there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control" the International Court of Justice adds its weight to a growing international clamour

I stress the importance of this point because it is not understood as an obligation of behaviour. It is understood by the Court as an obligation to attain results. It has a different legal bearing and it is an awareness of legal consciousness of what has changed in the world. So, refusing to allow a proper role for the CD on nuclear disarmament does little to convince the international community that all is being done fo fulfil this obligation.

A fortnight ago we had the benefit of listening to the Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Hon. Alexander Downer, who kindly laid before us the report of the Canberra Commission on the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons. We wish to express our gratitude to the Government of Australia for taking what we consider a particularly useful and timely initiative. The international stature and respectability of the Commission's members - among them Ambassador Celso Amorim, former Minister of External Relations of Brazil and one of my distinguished predecessors in this forum - attest to the seriousness and relevance of the outcome. Not only does the report propose realistic and practical steps towards a nuclear-weapon-free world. Its learned analysis of the nuclear-weapon situation, sober assessment of the consequences of a perpetuation of the nuclear threat and comprehensive rebuttal of avowed reasons for retention of such weapons provide perhaps the most authoritative and thorough consideration of this question since the end of the cold war. The importance of such a report calls for both general and specific comments.

Momentous historical upheavals are usually followed by a period of uncertainty, as old doctrines are challenged and efforts are made to reflect on, understand and submit proposals with regard to the new international reality. The Canberra Commission report emerges as a particularly lucid effort, for it addresses one of the main issues of our time in a manner that combines the guiding force of high values and rational arguments with profound experience and technical knowledge of the subject-matter. As the eminent Italian thinker Norberto Bobbio has pointed out, the combination of these two are essential ingredients for meaningful intellectual reflection. It leads us from doubt to choice and it permits us to deal with the blocked alleys that the risk of war represents for humanity.

Brazil naturally supports the Canberra Commission report's central proposition that the nuclear-weapon State should immediately commit themselves to the elimination of all nuclear weapons, as well as its recommendation with regard to a number of immediate and reinforcing steps, many of which are coincidental with suggestions put forward by certain G-21 countries last August. This is not to minimize the important and necessary bilateral negotiations such as the START process under which significant warhead reductions and details for their dismantlement have been agreed to. We encourage prompt ratification of START-II by the Russian Federation so that the envisaged reductions can be implemented, and look forward to agreements that will further reduce the overall number of nuclear weapons. Immediately entering into a commitment on elimination as sought by the Canberra Commission would not disturb these negotiations, except hopefully to encourage them to move faster. Likewise, agreeing to establish an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament in the CD and to negotiate multilaterally a phased framework leading to nuclear weapon elimination would not necessarily imply bringing to this forum all technical matters of implementation, which would best be worked out - and we clearly recognize that - by the nuclear-weapon States themselves.

The assessments of the Canberra Commission's report are also helping to stimulate debate on the vital issue of the role of nuclear weapons in a post-cold-war context. In many instances, this debate is helping to underline how some arguments in favour of nuclear weapons are wearing thin. Their deterrent value against chemical or biological weapons is at best questionable, and to actually use them in retaliation for such an attack does not seem a viable proposition politically, let along morally. As for responding to a chemical, biological or nuclear terrorist threat, what practical purpose could really be envisaged for nuclear weapons? In fact, and as has been stressed by former mulitary commanders of the highest rank and experience, these weapons have no military value and since their only purpose is to deter a similarly equipped opponent, elimination would remove their sole justification. There is also of course the old argument whereby nuclear weapons are inevitable since the knowledge to make them cannot be expunged, but neither can it be in the cases of chemical and biological weapons, blinding lasers or landmines, for that matter.

There is no convincing reason for tacitly accepting that nuclear weapons must be a permanent feature of human society. Worn arguments can no longer divert attention from the hard truth that sheer political will is what is really lacking for States to give up nuclear weapons. It requires courage and leadership to unequivocally engage on a course to free mankind of the threat of nuclear calamity. We look upon those who share this vision to live up to it. Clinging pathetically to nuclear status symbols may in the end be a far riskier - and costlier - path to take.

Before closing, let me refer to one of the final points made by the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom, Sir Michael Weston, in his thought-provoking statement on nuclear disarmament delivered at the outset of the current session, in which he referred to the great playwright Oscar Wilde. We of course cannot agree with Sir Michael in automatically assigning to the realm of Utopia any idea or proposal for nuclear disarmament that does not fit his country's views. Oscar Wilde's Dorian Gray would have been delighted at such a seemingly perfect dismissal of inconvenient ideas. But Oscar Wilde also shrewdly observed, in The critic as artist, that England had yet to add Utopia to her dominions. This was in 1890, but there may still be hope. Growing support for bolder nuclear disarmament measures is making it more difficult to continue to stand in the way of any CD role on this subject, as well as to convincingly ascribe impractical or idealistic labels to ideas and proposals which are increasingly recognized as reasonable.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Brazil for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now call upon Ambassador Kurokochi of Japan.

Mrs. KUROKOCHI (Japan): I would like to make a brief statement today on the subject of nuclear disarmament. As I have already explained Japan's views on how the Conference on Disarmament should address this issue, both in the plenary on 30 January and in the informal open-ended Presidential consultations, I will not go into detail, but I would like to introduce Japan's proposal for a special coordinator on nuclear disarmament. As I have stated before, my delegation is of the view that, in addition to the fissile material cut-off treaty, the Conference should identify the issues of nuclear disarmament to be negotiated in the future. While nuclear disarmament is the most frequently discussed issue in the Conference on Disarmament this session, it seems that the basic lines of thought for dealing with nuclear disarmament continue to be divergent. Likewise, a convergence of views on an appropriate forum, or mechanism, has not yet evolved. Under these circumstances, we believe that the most practical approach to this problem is to make use of as flexible a mechanism as possible with a view to identifying the issue or issues of nuclear disarmament to be negotiated in the Conference on Disarmament. For this purpose, we propose that the Conference appoint a special coordinator who could, by means of bilateral, multilateral or any other form of consultations and discussion, provide a most appropriate forum for our deliberations. This will help to start, with no further delay, the process of building the common ground for this very difficult issue.

Japan's proposal is as follows:

> "The Conference on Disarmament appoints a special coordinator to conduct consultations with its members to identify the issue(s) in the field of nuclear disarmament which could be negotiated in the Conference and to report to the Conference on the result of these consultations no later than the conclusion of the 1997 session."

We have prepared the text of our proposal with some explanatory notes. I would be grateful if the necessary arrangements could be made for this text to be circulated as an official document of the Conference on Disarmament.

Mr. NASSERI (Islamic Republic of Iran): Mr. President, you have been pursuing tirelessly, ever since you took the responsibility of leading the Conference, the issues that confront the Conference - the important questions of the agenda and the programme of work. You have spared no effort in trying to bring about an agreement within the Conference. The extensive consultations, formal and informal, have, in our view, been particularly useful in this context.

The Group of 21, for its part, has also been engaged on this issue and has held intensive consultations within the Group and without the Group - consultations which, of course, do continue. But I believe now, as far as the question of the agenda is concerned, it is in a position to forward a proposal that we believe could be a basis for agreement by the Conference. In that light, and since the plenary today has been rather short, I wish to request a 15-minute suspension of the meeting - and I mean 15 minutes - so that we could have further consultations on the matter and that hopefully we could be able to bring the proposal to the floor today.

The PRESIDENT: Thank you very much for your suggestion. I now give the floor to Ambassador Benjelloun-Touimi of Morocco.

Mr. BENJELLOUN-TOUIMI (Morocco): Of course, I subscribe to what our Coordinator has just said. We have just been given a document which seems to be a draft agenda for 1997. I wanted, before we go into a recess, to understand what the last sentence in it means. It seems rather strange to me, but of course, I think that if you give us some explanation, then the recess will make sense to us to be able to understand that.

The PRESIDENT: Thank you very much for your question. Well, actually, my intention was to suspend the plenary meeting and then at 12 noon convene an informal plenary for the purpose of discussing the draft agenda for the 1997 session. Then, that informal plenary would be followed by the resumed plenary.

I have just circulated to all of you my draft agenda for the 1997 session, and in reaction to the question raised by Ambassador Benjelloun-Touimi, this is exactly the same as the 1996 annual agenda minus one item, which is the Comprehensive nuclear-test ban. And I added one simple sentence at the bottom of the draft agenda, which is my attempt to make everybody happy. I hope that when we convene the informal plenary at 12 noon, discussions can be conducted on the basis of my draft agenda.

Mr. RAMAKER (Netherlands): Thank you very much, Mr. President, for the explanation you gave on the paper that you have just circulated. I thank you also for suspending the meeting until 12 noon. That would give some time, as you said, for consultations. I simply asked for the floor to make use of this microphone in order to suggest that the Western Group, very briefly, meets in room I so that I could inform them, to the extent necessary, of a number of discussions that have taken place during yesterday and during the morning, in which I was involved. So, it is not really to have a meeting, just five minutes of briefing, whereafter, I think, consultations as you suggested should go on in this room with all concerned so as to see whether we can reach a conclusion and discuss this as you suggested at the informal plenary at 12 o'clock. So it is mainly to abuse this microphone and ask that the members of my group come to room I, if that is open.

The PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. I hope my suggestion of 45 minutes' suspension will be acceptable to Ambassador Nasseri.

Mr. NASSERI (Islamic Republic of Iran): Well, certainly. I had asked for 15 minutes - 45 minutes is really extravagant. May I say then, if it is possible, perhaps our group could stay in this room, since it is a larger group, for consultations.

The meeting was suspended at 11.15 a.m. on 13 February and resumed at 12.10 p.m. on 14 February.

The PRESIDENT: The 755th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament is resumed.

I should like to put before you the draft agenda of the Conference for the 1997 session. This draft is contained in document CD/WP.483/Rev.1, which has been circulated to all of you. I assume that there is consensus on this draft agenda. I give the floor to the representative of Germany.

Mr. ASCHENBACH (Germany): The German delegation has stated in the informal plenary we just had that it was forced to reserve its position on the complex we have been discussing, the complete complex of the agenda. So I want to state this reservation now in the formal plenary.

The PRESIDENT: On the part of the President, having taken note of the statement by the representative of Germany, I declare the agenda is adopted.

In connection with the adoption of this agenda, I, as the President of the CD, should like to state that it is my understanding that if there is a consensus in the Conference to deal with any issues, they could be dealt with within this agenda.

I should like to express my deep appreciation to all delegations for the spirit of compromise and flexibility, and furthermore patience, which made the adoption of the agenda possible.

As this is the last plenary of the Conference on Disarmament being presided over by the Republic of Korea, permit me to make a few comments.

As has been the case in the past, this year's CD started its work endeavouring to adopt its annual agenda, to establish its programme of work and to solve the recurrent issue of expanding its membership. I am pleased that the CD has been able to adopt this annual agenda for 1997 at the eleventh hour of my presidency. This was possible due to the spirit of cooperation, compromise and patience displayed by all the delegations. But there is still much work to be done, including the establishment of the work programme and organization of arrangements so that the substantive work in the CD may begin. Also, the CD has agreed to appoint a special coordinator on the expansion of its membership with a broad mandate. However, the appointment *per se* remains pending. Through the plenaries and other forms of consultations, the delegations identified their priority issues and made their positions on such issues more clearly known. In my view, the three sessions of the open-ended informal Presidential consultations, each devoted to such issues as nuclear disarmament, a fissile material cut-off treaty and anti-personnel landmines, were useful and contributed to moving the overall process of the CD forward.

I take this opportunity to pay tribute to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Kofi Annan, the Foreign Minister of Italy, Mr. Lamberto Dini, and the Foreign Minister of Australia, Mr. Alexander Downer, who each contributed to galvanizing the CD process by addressing the plenary at the beginning of its annual session.

I can now say that the task of the rotating President of the CD is not easy to fulfil. I know that the President's job is, *inter alia* to leave no stones unturned in pursuit of the common ground or consensus shared by all the members of the CD for starting negotiations on agreed issues. No efforts were spared on my part. The question of how to enhance the credibility and relevance of the CD as the single, multilateral negotiating forum for disarmament, which I raised in my opening statement on 21 January 1997, has yet to be answered collectively by all CD members. I extend my support and best wishes to the incoming President, the distinguished representative of Romania, who, I am sure, will advance most efficiently the important tasks of the presidency. I thank all the delegations of the CD for their cooperation and assistance during my presidency. My appreciation also goes to Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, the Secretary-General of the CD, Mr. Abdelkader Bensmail, the Deputy Secretary-General, and all the staff members of the secretariat, as well as the interpreters, for their highly valuable contributions. Finally, I wish all of you a very enjoyable weekend. The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on Thursday, 20 February 1997, at 10 o'clock.

The meeting rose at 6.15 p.m.

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.756
20 February 1997

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE SEVEN HUNDRED AND FIFTY-SIXTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 20 February 1997, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Grecu (Romania)

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 756th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

My first words will be to express our sincere condolences and sympathy to the Chinese delegation on the occasion of the passing away of Deng Xiaoping, a paramount leader who has shaped Chinese history over decades, and an extraordinary figure on the international stage.

At the outset, I should like, on behalf of the Conference and on my own behalf, to extend a warm welcome to our distinguished visitors today: the Right Honourable Don McKinnon, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade and Minister for Disarmament and Arms Control of New Zealand, and His Excellency Eugeniusz Wyzner, Secretary of State and First Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Poland. The records of the Conference indicate that today's visit of His Excellency Don McKinnon is the seventh visit by a high-level Government official of New Zealand to the Conference on Disarmament. This testifies to the continued interest of the New Zealand authorities in the work of our Conference and the importance they attach to the multilateral approach to arms control and disarmament. Ambassador Wyzner is also a regular visitor to our Conference since he assumed his important functions. I am sure that the Conference is looking forward to listening to their statements.

Besides the Minister of New Zealand and the Secretary of State of Poland, I have on my list of speakers for today the representatives of Hungary, Indonesia, Ireland and Switzerland.

Once we have exhausted the list of speakers for today, I intend to put for the decision of the Conference the requests of Bolivia and Costa Rica to participate in our work as observers during the current session. With your concurrence, I shall put these requests for decisions without first going into an informal meeting.

Before giving the floor to the first speaker, I should like to make some opening remarks.

Let me start by addressing a word of gratitude to my esteemed predecessor, Ambassador Sun of the Republic of Korea, who conducted the work of the Conference in an exemplary, objective and efficient way. He deserves our admiration for succeeding to bring about the agenda of this year's session and breaking the ground for other achievements in terms of organizational arrangements. By the same token, I am convinced that the wealth of experience and wise counsel of Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, of his deputy, Mr. Abdelkader Bensmail, and of all members of the secretariat will be of great help in performing my functions as President of this body.

It is a great honour for me to assume the presidency of the Conference on behalf of Romania. At the same time, I take this as a particular responsibility. At the dawn of a new century the Conference on Disarmament is

(The President)

called to embark upon a process of self-examination and adaptation to a changed political environment. Well before the conclusion of the negotiations on the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty last year we all started to consider the future of the Conference on Disarmament, its new priorities, how it could best serve the legitimate aspirations of mankind. Appropriate responses and concrete actions are expected from us without undue delay. Indeed, in setting its objectives and working methods, in its very spirit, the Conference must reflect current international trends. Its negotiating role must be preserved and reinforced. Concrete results must crown our work if the Conference is to remain faithful to its generous goals. I shall spare no effort to serve the interests of the Conference to the best of my ability, in a balanced, open and pragmatic way. To that end, I pledge to all of you my entire dedication in discharging the demanding duties entrusted to the presiding officer of this illustrious body. And I rely on your assistance in dealing with the important questions ahead of us.

A "long-sought, hard-fought" objective in the process of arms control and disarmament, the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty has been recently brought to life due to painstaking negotiations undertaken by the Conference. Although the Treaty could not be formally adopted in this chamber it represents, along with the Chemical Weapons Convention, a major achievement of multilateral disarmament diplomacy in the post-cold-war era. As it stands now and has been proven at the signing ceremony, the CTBT satisfies the basic expectations of a large number of States all over the world. They sincerely share the view that the Treaty will impose, for the first time, constraints on the qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons and bring the nuclear arms race to a definitive end. That CTBT will make a key contribution to the programme of action on non-proliferation and disarmament agreed at the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review and Extension Conference, as a crucial step in the process towards complete nuclear disarmament. The conclusion of the CTBT will indeed make it possible to address the next important steps toward this goal.

It is now high time for all the friends of the CTBT to make every effort in order to speed up the ratification process and the entry into force of the Treaty as soon as possible.

Now that the CTBT is completed, a legitimate question arises: what will be next on the disarmament agenda? Assessing the outcome of the consultations conducted by my predecessor, it seems that three issues emerge as priorities of action, demanding appropriate answers on our part: nuclear disarmament, the fissile material cut-off and anti-personnel landmines.

The complete elimination of nuclear weapons is the declared goal of the whole international community. It is the supreme objective on the way to building a safer world for the generations to come. Since the end of the cold war, nuclear disarmament has registered unprecedented strides due to individual, bilateral and collective efforts. Unthinkable just 10 years ago, the achievements so far are impressive; they have indicated a viable, realistic, concrete path to follow. Other approaches could also be imagined, as they have taken shape in well-known initiatives. The CTBT has convincingly demonstrated that the multilateral negotiating framework can bring important contributions to the overall process. The real problem now facing the Conference is how it could best promote nuclear disarmament so as to complement and build on the existing achievements. In the opinion of the United Nations Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, who addressed the Conference recently, the CD has a unique opportunity to build on the successful work of the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the parties to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

I consider seeking the views of member States on how to deal with nuclear disarmament within our Conference as one of the most urgent tasks of my mandate.

Many of us believe that a multilateral, effectively verifiable treaty to prohibit the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices will constitute a prerequisite step in the way towards a nuclear-weapon-free world. An FMCT is meant to cap the amount of fissile materials available for explosive military purposes not only in nuclear-weapon States but also in those States which currently have unsafeguarded enrichment or reprocessing plants. It will contribute to ensuring the conditions under which the process of nuclear disarmament can broaden, constrain the opportunities for vertical proliferation and help prevent any future resumption of the nuclear arms race.

The year 1995 marked an encouraging development in this field because for the first time the CD agreed to establish a "cut-off" ad hoc committee with a negotiating mandate under item 2 of that session's agenda. I hope that consensus on the important initiative on banning the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices can be invigorated and brought to fruition soon.

While the importance of addressing issues pertaining to weapons of mass destruction cannot be overemphasized, I shall be remiss if I overlook the acute problem of conventional armaments, in particular anti-personnel landmines, which constitute one of the most dramatic realities of our times. The recent adoption of the amended Protocol II to the Certain Conventional Weapons Convention is considered by many as an incomplete measure, lacking an important degree of efficiency, inadequate in coping with the global scourge of anti-personnel landmines towards the eventual elimination of these horrendous weapons. In reaction, an international strategy has been set up aiming at a total ban on APLs. Its stated goal is most ambitious: to conclude a treaty to that end by December 1997. Other initiatives in the same direction, undertaken by governments or non-governmental organizations in the political as well as practical fields, now intensify and expand on a global scale. Like the Secretary-General of the United Nations, I sincerely believe that the sole multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament of the international community cannot remain apart from this ever-growing trend of action. There is, after all, a question of credibility and relevance facing our Conference.

I can assure you that, on my part, I shall do my utmost in order to enable a consensus within the Conference on dealing with the issue of anti-personnel landmines. Our future work should address the issue comprehensively, taking into account all relevant aspects, including national security and defence concerns, as have already been voiced by many delegations. At the same time, our activity should be complementary to ongoing initiatives.

Other, more traditional issues, such as the prevention of an arms race in outer space, security assurances for non-nuclear States, and transparency in armaments, could be fruitfully addressed during our debates, within appropriate structures and working formulae.

I deem it no less important to bring our agenda up to date. At the beginning of last year's session we adopted a pragmatic work programme, centred on the completion of the CTBT, which in no way prejudged our individual positions. It was a useful approach which the Conference may wish to repeat this year. But we also need to address seriously the question of adapting our agenda to present-day realities, building upon what was already achieved in 1996 under the distinguished guidance of Ambassador Meghlaoui of Algeria. The appointment of a special coordinator to deal with the agenda's reform, therefore, seems to me important.

I look in the same way at the problem of further expanding the membership of the Conference and hope to announce soon the person entrusted with such a delicate responsibility.

Let me repeat my pledge to spare no effort in fulfilling the mandate entrusted to me. As a first step, I intend to hold a series of bilateral consultations with each and every delegation, in order to give everybody an opportunity to address outstanding issues facing the Conference, directly with the President, in an orderly and non-discriminatory fashion. You have already received, from the secretariat, an invitation to bilateral talks. After taking stock of the results, I shall further explore, in the most appropriate settings, what window of opportunity does exist toward consensus. But let us be very clear: the President is, as always, in the hands of the Conference; he cannot succeed where all of us fail.

Guided by optimism, courage and goodwill, the Conference should once again display its great potential to deal with challenges ahead. I strongly believe that this potential should be used, now maybe more than ever, most pragmatically to meet the hopes of the international community for greater stability and security worldwide.

This concludes my statement, and I thank you very much for your attention.

It now gives me great pleasure to give the floor to the Right Honourable Don McKinnon of New Zealand.

Mr. McKINNON (New Zealand): Mr. President, let me begin by congratulating you on the assumption of your presidency, and it is certainly a great deal of pleasure to me to have the opportunity to address this Conference on Disarmament. Let me also express my condolences to the Chinese delegation on the passing on of Mr. Deng Xiaoping, a man who indelibly put his mark on China as it is today.

I want to speak today about the important place we see for the Conference in relation to the web of interlocking commitments which collectively shape the security of each of our nations.

This Conference now comprises more than 60 countries from all corners of the globe - my country is one of the farthermost from this city. It negotiates agreements which aim to enhance security in all parts of the world, each of them a step towards the goal of general and complete disarmament under effective international control.

The list of achievements since the Conference began its endeavours is encouraging. Two entire classes of weapons that cause destruction on a massive and indiscriminate scale - chemical weapons and biological weapons - have been banned.

With respect to nuclear weapons, it was the CD which in 1968 made possible the Non-Proliferation Treaty under which the nuclear-weapon States agreed to eliminate these weapons, and almost all other nations have agreed to forswear the nuclear option entirely. And much to our satisfaction, 141 countries have now signed the ban on nuclear testing which was negotiated so recently in this chamber.

I wish today, therefore, to congratulate the Conference on Disarmament on those achievements, and to offer encouragement to the Conference to move on with confidence and determination to new tasks.

Moreover, the disarmament and arms control agenda is far from exhausted. Conventional and nuclear disarmament issues are complex and, in their scale, often very daunting. In the past progress has often been achieved, slowly, and in small steps, punctuated by periods of worrying hiatus.

We came, during the cold war, to accept this hesitation as the normal process of international consensus-building on arms control issues. But I want to put it to you, that what was normal in those days, need not be the governing reality today. It has been said many times, but remains true and deserves repeating, that there are opportunities today which did not exist a decade ago to reduce the risks posed by weapons of mass destruction. We must go forward so as to take maximum advantage of the reduction of strategic tension accompanying the end of the cold war. We must now also address the role which conventional weapons are now playing in the rise in regional conflicts with their devastating toll on human life.

We would all wish for a world free of war. This may not be immediately attainable, but there is an overwhelming desire for a world free of nuclear

(Mr. McKinnon, New Zealand)

weapons. The International Court of Justice has usefully and unanimously confirmed that there is a legal obligation to pursue and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to this end. The report of the Canberra Commission, introduced to this Conference last month by my Australian colleague, identifies a range of practical and progressively achievable actions and steps which need to be taken.

I know there are some who believe that this Conference should be the exclusive focus of this action, and others who identify only a marginal role for the CD.

To us, this argument seems somewhat beside the point. The trend towards reductions and ultimate elimination can, and should, be consolidated. But the important thing is that the momentum is maintained and enhanced. Where progress is achieved is less important to ordinary citizens than the fact that demonstrable progress must continue to be made.

It is a fact that the process of irreversible nuclear disarmament began in a bilateral framework. There were many good reasons, including the historical environment, why that is so. We applaud the success of the START process and we strongly urge that the START II Treaty enter into force as soon as possible. We look forward positively to a very early commencement of START III negotiations - preferably including, at the soonest possible time, all five of the nuclear-weapon States.

That said, we are also convinced that sustainable progress is not a matter which can be left solely to the nuclear-weapons States alone. We strongly endorse the political agreement reached in 1995 in conjunction with the decision to make permanent the Non-Proliferation Treaty. That agreement involved reinvigorating the multilateral disarmament process by which the NPT's interrelated goals of non-proliferation, universality and, ultimately, nuclear disarmament are pursued.

If there is a sense that a dynamic and genuinely interactive process is under way, involving progress at both bilateral and multilateral levels, we are convinced that wide international support will be forthcoming.

We know that developments affecting global and regional security are occurring which are outside the influence of the Conference on Disarmament. This reality demands our continuing attention to the big picture, and the "big picture" is about substance, not procedures. It demands that we put less efforts into wrangling about process and more effort into negotiating measures not only on nuclear weapons, but also to verify the ban on biological weapons, and our full support for the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention which we hope will come into force in late April with the United States and the Russian Federation amongst its members.

At the regional level the steps we and other members of the ASEAN Regional Forum have taken together to promote security complement those arrangements developed for the greater security of countries in Europe, Latin America, and Africa. We hope that this trend will soon extend to the Middle East and South Asia.

New Zealand works with our fellow members of the South Pacific Forum to protect our region's status as a zone free of nuclear weapons. Last October we joined with members of other zones to reiterate our conviction that nuclear-weapon-free zones enhance regional and global security, and bring us closer to our goal of a world free of nuclear weapons.

But a ready acknowledgement of the progress that must be achieved outside the Conference on Disarmament if we are to approach a world in which the steady reduction and eventual elimination of nuclear weapons is possible does not, to our mind, diminish the contribution that this Conference must also make.

The long-awaited Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban treaty will, I am sure, be seen by future generations as a major building-block of such a world, and one achieved by a multilateral negotiating process. We believe that there are additional multilateral negotiating steps which the CD can and must take which, taken together with other tracks inside and outside the CD, can be fairly viewed as a part of a comprehensive programme. Banning the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons is one such step ripe for CD negotiation, and I urge the Conference to take it up without further delay. New Zealand's view is that the report of the Canadian Special Coordinator allows for an approach which could address the concerns of all in relation to the scope of the production ban.

But again I stress that each of these steps has to be part of a broader approach. It is not satisfactory to wait until the conclusion of the cut-off convention before taking another step in the field of nuclear disarmament. An ad hoc committee with an overarching mandate to contribute to this ultimate goal could begin immediately with the cut-off negotiations, while also considering longer-term issues. The Committee would, in effect, be operating on two levels - an active negotiating track and a preparatory track. For the latter, there is already an abundance of material to begin with, including notably the Canberra Commission's report, while some members of this Conference have put forward their own "programme of action". Discussion of the various proposals would enable the Conference to identify those on which it can add value now itself, those on which it can add value in the future, and those on which immediate progress would more readily be achieved, for example if pursued among the nuclear-weapon States themselves.

I am aware of, and share, the view that the Conference must not become a talk-shop, but one does not have to look far into the past to find examples of ad hoc committees which prepared the ground carefully and effectively for eventual negotiations. This interactive approach was in fact the successful precursor to the CTBT negotiations. And a dynamic approach of this kind would be consistent with the programme of action defined by Non-Proliferation Treaty

States parties in April 1995. Most importantly, it will help to restore and help to maintain confidence in the agreements reached in relation to that Treaty's indefinite extension.

While New Zealand agrees with the priority attached to the cut-off negotiations, I welcome the renewed focus in discussions on the role the Conference on Disarmament can play on conventional arms control and disarmament questions. An understandable preoccupation with the dangers posed by weapons of mass destruction must not prevent the international community from addressing ways and means to reduce as quickly as possible the risks posed by the weapons which make up the armouries of the great majority of nations. Such weapons may not have the same destructive powers as nuclear, chemical or biological weapons but they can and do extract an appalling toll around the world and their proliferation can be, and is, destabilizing.

I am well aware that one of the key questions under consideration in recent weeks is whether the Conference might play a part in international efforts to address the problem of anti-personnel landmines. There is a strong tide of international opinion - which New Zealand supports vigorously - that rejects the military use of these most indiscriminate weapons when set against the deadly toll extracted on innocent civilians, as well as the economic and developmental loss in countries already devastated by war, and concludes that only a total ban is an acceptable goal. Now, of course there are many aspects to this issue, including a concern about the potential for export of mine production facilities offshore.

Where should a total ban be negotiated? Well, New Zealand has considered three alternatives, each with its respective advantages and disadvantages. First there is the process of reviewing the Inhumane Weapons Convention which produced some very useful advances - New Zealand plans to express its consent to be bound by the amended Protocol II in the next few months. Secondly, we have the Conference on Disarmament here. It is the international community's normal negotiating body. Its membership includes some, but not all, of the countries who use, produce, trade or are affected by landmines. And thirdly, there is the process begun in Ottawa last October which offers a free-standing forum where all those nations committed to a total ban could quite quickly achieve their common aim, setting a norm against the use, production, stockpiling and transfer of APLMs.

New Zealand has declared a unilateral moratorium on the use of these APLMs by the New Zealand Defence Force. We prohibit the export of these weapons and we will participate in any and all collective efforts to put in place rapidly a total ban which can command the support of as many countries as possible.

We are concerned to capture the political impetus for early action and therefore support the Ottawa Process and will participate enthusiastically in it.

We also accept that there is a potential role, of course, for the CD. We would be pleased to see a negotiation in the CD proceed in parallel with the Ottawa Process provided there is a political willingness to reach an early agreement on a strong mandate supportive of an early and comprehensive outcome.

I need to stress in this context that New Zealand's commitment is not limited to negotiation of new agreements. We are making a significant effort to help address the practical problems in the field which flow from the indiscriminate use of landmines in countries that I have seen like Cambodia, Angola and Mozambique. Our Defence Force contributes to demining efforts around the world in the above countries, as well as providing practical support to the United Nations Secretariat in New York and to the United Nations Demining Trust Fund.

In addition to the problem of landmines, there are other pressing conventional arms questions which of course the CD must take up. One of the fruits of the end of the cold war has been the suspension of strategic competition, reflected in the decline in some countries of military expenditure. Yet there is evidence that the rapidly evolving sophistication of conventional arms, and commercial pressures to secure export sales, are creating a wider market for weapons. The proliferation of such conventional arms, especially to regional trouble spots, has implications for regional military balances as well as for the international community.

The United Nations Conventional Arms Register and the Wassenaar Arrangement both aim to promote transparency and greater responsibility in the transfer of conventional arms and dual-use goods and technologies, thus helping to prevent destabilizing accumulations. Given the trend I have mentioned, the Conference should develop further global measures to curtail destabilizing build-ups of conventional arms.

So my aim today has been to convey, from a small country's perspective, our sense of the Conference's role and our view of its priorities, far as we are from this city of Geneva. The Conference does not operate in isolation from the wider interplay of nations and regions searching for enhanced security. It has to be accountable to the wider international community.

The composition and working processes of the CD must remain fully conducive to the negotiating challenge. The Conference has already demonstrated a capacity to reform with the expansion of its membership achieved last July. Its membership today, and a continuing open mind to additional members, will ensure that it deserves the international community's backing well into the twenty-first century. Moreover the Conference cannot remain isolated from the drive to reform the United Nations system and bring it up to date. The Conference should therefore initiate a study of its own working methods, consistent with the overall goal of ensuring that the Conference is an effective instrument of the international community for the next 50 years.

And let me now close by again welcoming this opportunity to demonstrate New Zealand's commitment to the Conference on Disarmament, and wishing you and the Conference a very productive and worthwhile session.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade and for Disarmament and Arms Control of New Zealand for his important statement and for the kind words he addressed to the Chair. I should now like to give the floor to Ambassador Eugeniusz Wyzner of Poland.

Mr. WYZNER (Poland): First, I wish to join you, Mr. President, and Minister McKinnon in expressing to the delegation of China our profound condolences on the passing of Deng Xiaoping, one of the outstanding statesmen of the twentieth century, a great leader of the People's Republic of China and an architect of its remarkable economic growth.

Let me first convey to you my felicitations on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. My delegation is delighted to see the Chair of the CD occupied by a representative of Romania, a country with which Poland is linked by traditional bonds of friendship, which - as confirmed during the recent visit of the President of Romania, Emil Constantinescu, to Warsaw - is firmly based on shared values and aspirations. You may rest assured that in the discharge of your mandate you will have the full cooperation and support of the Polish delegation.

I also express to the outgoing President, the distinguished representative of the Republic of Korea, Ambassador Sun, our appreciation for the dedication and perseverance with which he sought to put the 1997 session of the Conference under way as expeditiously as possible.

I would also like to add words of greetings to my good friend and colleague from my days at the United Nations Secretariat, Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, the distinguished Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and personal representative of the Secretary-General, as well as to the Deputy Secretary-General of the CD, Mr. Abdelkader Bensmail.

It is invariably a great privilege and pleasure for me to address the Conference on Disarmament. More than that, it is also an indication of the importance which Poland has consistently attached to disarmament and arms control. In fact, for its national security my country relies on concrete disarmament measures coupled with expanding the area of European peace, stability and prosperity associated with the processes of Euro-Atlantic integration in the political, economic and military fields. As the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum of the international community, the Conference on Disarmament has, over the years, been instrumental in negotiating major arms control and disarmament agreements, especially in the field of weapons of mass destruction. The fact that one of them - the Chemical Weapons Convention, to which I shall revert in a little while - will shortly go into effect only adds to the esteem in which this forum is held by the international community.

The remarkable result of its session last year, the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty, has added to the high standing of the CD. With the

CTBT overwhelmingly supported by the United Nations General Assembly last September, the role of the Conference on Disarmament as a negotiating organ that "can deliver" has been established even more firmly.

In our view, therefore, no effort should be spared in order to make it possible for the CD to remain true to its image as a multilateral body with a clear mission. The agenda for 1997 which has just been approved must provide a framework for a realistic work programme, carrying a reasonable promise of early and tangible results. The promise of such results would be jeopardized or lost altogether if efforts to reach agreement on a work programme were to be complicated by linkage of issues and belittling or total disregard of their intrinsic merit. Embarking on such a course would not be helpful.

We need to invoke the more positive experience of this body, that of the readiness of its members to be flexible over narrower concerns in the broader and overriding interest of international peace, security and cooperation.

By reaching early agreement on the practical goal, or goals, which would focus its attention in the post-CTBT days, the CD will demonstrate its sustained vitality. It would also be a signal that following the long overdue expansion of its membership the credibility and effectiveness of the Conference on Disarmament have been significantly enhanced.

Poland strongly believes that pending the conclusion of its consultations on the review of its agenda, and without prejudice to their outcome, the CD will agree on a practical programme of work which could eventually result in a new multilateral agreement. In Poland's view, such potential can be found in the cut-off in the production of fissile material for weapons or other military purposes. We believe that with the comprehensive test ban issue taken off the agenda of the Conference, the negotiation of an early cut-off treaty appears to us to be the logical next step to take, and in this regard we share your opinion as expressed in your opening statement.

In our view, a renewed effort must be made to re-establish the relevant ad hoc committee and launch negotiations in that respect as soon as possible. Squarely placed within the context of nuclear disarmament, such negotiations ought to be the focal point of CD efforts in 1997. Should we fail to seize this window of opportunity, our ultimate objective of a world free of the nuclear threat might not be a practical proposition and a credible beacon into the twenty-first century.

There are at least two abiding reasons why the CD should undertake cut-off negotiations. First, a fissile material cut-off treaty would constitute yet another major step towards meeting the obligations of article VI of the NPT. Second, the immediate launching of negotiations in that respect would be consistent with the "Principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament" adopted by the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference.

A fissile material cut-off treaty would represent a significant supplement to the NPT and CTBT, the two CD-negotiated instruments that form the mainstay of the non-proliferation regime.

In our view, the Ad Hoc Committee established in March 1995 should be reactivated immediately and instructed to start constructive negotiations under its original mandate which, as it is known, is broad enough to accommodate all legitimate concerns. I am sure that no delegation would be found out of order by raising for consideration in the Ad Hoc Committee any issue relating to the scope of the future treaty.

It is clear that a ban on anti-personnel landmines is increasingly on the minds of the international community. That has been confirmed by the statement just delivered by the distinguished Minister of New Zealand, by the debate at the United Nations General Assembly last year and by the many statements and important proposals put forth at the current session of the CD. The issue is not whether to seek an APL ban. The point is rather how and where to go about it, and when to get it.

The growing public concern over the global landmine crisis, its humanitarian aspects and the calls for urgent remedial action must come as no surprise to this body. Half a century after the Second World War, Poland has still to cope with the wartime heritage of killing and maiming landmines and other ordnance. Polish servicemen on United Nations peace-keeping missions in the Middle East, on duty in the former Yugoslavia and elsewhere, run daily the risk of their lives from a variety of APLs, including booby traps.

For these reasons, also, we have felt all along - and I said so last year in my statements in this forum and in the First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly - that the Conference on Disarmament, a global body by definition, has a useful role to play in seeking global bans on specific conventional weapons systems, including landmines. We are determined to stay in the mainstream of international efforts to deal effectively with the global landmine crisis. To prove it, here are some of my Government's actions resulting in, first, a moratorium on exports of anti-personnel landmines which, upon its expiry on 1 January 1998, will be extended indefinitely; second, appropriate administrative procedures under way with a view to the early ratification of Additional Protocol II (the Landmine Protocol) of the CCW Convention; and third, co-sponsorship of General Assembly resolution 51/45 S, as well as associating with the "Ottawa Process" and its general objectives.

At this juncture let me say that Poland has taken note with interest of the initiative of the Government of Canada to conclude by the end of 1997, for humanitarian considerations, an anti-personnel landmine agreement in a free-standing, other-than-CD forum.

We have also welcomed the proposal of France for a phased approach to an APL ban within the context of the CD, as well as the related United Kingdom document containing a draft mandate for such negotiations in an ad hoc committee to be established by the Conference on Disarmament.

The Government of Poland considers that the pursuit of a global ban on APLs, a measure aimed at the elimination of a specific weapons system to which some ascribe a defensive role, should be the responsibility of the Conference on Disarmament. To our mind, an appropriate negotiating process in this respect should envisage the active participation of the principal producers, exporters and users of APLs. Such negotiations would add substance to and meaningfully complement the efforts of the like-minded countries within the framework of the "Ottawa Process", which seeks a narrower and early accord aiming at humanitarian objectives.

Poland welcomes the growing appreciation for the potentially synergistic effect of these two approaches. Accordingly, we strongly support calls for the early establishment by the CD of an appropriate ad hoc committee. The United Kingdom proposal suggests a good starting-point and a suitable basis for agreement on a broadly acceptable mandate in this respect. We are ready to take a constructive part in any negotiations that the Conference on Disarmament might decide to undertake soon.

My country considers it desirable that some of the issues dealt with in the past in the relevant ad hoc committees also be actively pursued in 1997.

We believe that it would be useful, for instance, to go back to the question of security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States. In particular, the unilateral security assurances of the nuclear-weapon Powers to non-nuclear-weapon States contained, as we know, in Security Council resolution 984, deserve careful examination to determine whether they could represent a basis for the search of broader multilateral instruments of a legally binding nature.

Likewise, nothing should, in our view, stand in the way of a comprehensive reassessment of the question of transparency in armaments, including work on further improvement of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. A possible substantive and geographical expansion of the United Nations Register, providing for coverage of other categories and classes of weapons, could render that instrument more attractive to States which have not yet associated themselves with its objectives. In effect, an updated register could attract much wider, hopefully universal, support.

In Europe, as is well known, transparency in military matters was critically important for the successful conclusion of the CFE Treaty of 1990. Today, when the Treaty comes for re-negotiation to reflect better the present political and strategic realities in Europe, transparency and trust related to military matters are as important. Due to their relevance in the European region and beyond, the question of transparency as, indeed, the broader issue of control of conventional weapons, deserves, therefore, priority attention. As the incoming Chairman of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe for 1998, and now a member of its "Troika" or bureau, Poland intends to keep this consideration in mind. At a time when thousands perish from conventional arms indiscriminately used in countless regional conflicts, both internal and international, the continued indifference of this forum to calls for meaningful action in that regard, we think, cannot be sustained any longer.

My Government is fully confident that, provided there is political will, tangible action addressing conventional weapons would not be beyond the scope either of the ability or the competence of a forum that has to its credit the successful negotiation of bans on whole categories of weapons of mass destruction, including biological and chemical weapons.

Turning briefly to these subjects, which no longer figure on the CD agenda but certainly stay within the purview of its attention, let me say that the Government of Poland has welcomed with satisfaction the results of the recent Fourth Review Conference of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention. We have been gratified in particular by the unequivocal support which the Conference in its Final Declaration gave to the Ad Hoc Group of States parties to continue and speed up its efforts to elaborate an effective verification mechanism which this important treaty is now lacking. We trust that such encouragement will enable the Ad Hoc Group to proceed soon to actual drafting, an exercise which we expect to produce a draft verification protocol acceptable to all States parties to the BTW Convention.

In concluding my intervention, I should like to offer a comment or two on the Chemical Weapons Convention. The Government of Poland warmly welcomes the fact that this important treaty will go into effect in a little over two months - on 29 April. As a result, the CWC Organization in The Hague will be able to proceed to the elaborate verification procedures provided for in the Convention.

We were gratified that in view of the imminence of this event, the United Nations General Assembly was able last fall, for the first time in some years, to adopt the relevant resolution without a vote. As it is known, resolution 51/45 T makes it plain that for the CW Convention to be fully effective, vigorously implemented and credible, it has to obtain universal support and as many ratifications by the time of its entry into effect as possible. This goes, in the first place, for States with significant chemical industries and the declared possessors of CW.

The Polish Parliament ratified the CW Convention on 27 July 1995. Since then, specific measures have been enacted providing for an appropriate national implementation oversight mechanism. For that purpose, an Interministerial Committee, which I have the honour to chair, and a Standing Inter-Agency Expert Group have been established.

The unique significance of the CW Convention and its implementation, especially the destruction of stocks, stems from the deadly efficacy of chemical weapons both in wartime and long thereafter. On one occasion this fact was painfully brought to mind by an act of terrorists. On another and more recent one, by the misfortune of a group of Polish fishermen, who, instead of the usual catch, hauled on board their small craft from the shallow Baltic waters off the Polish coast remnants of deadly mustard gas. Early and effective medical intervention saved their lives. This, however, may not always be the case. Vast quantities of poison gas in corroding canisters dumped in the Baltic will be an ever-present hazard in those shallow waters unless definite action is taken.

Appropriate damage control measures and prevention of threats to lives and the environment posed by the underwater stockpile of poison gas are among the chief concerns of the respective Polish institutions. These and relevant problems are also cooperatively discussed within the framework of the Council of Baltic States.

The Conference on Disarmament has found itself at an important crossroads. It has to decide which way to turn and which practical goals to pursue with firmness, dedication and competence. I am confident that its laudable record of past accomplishment is a heritage of wisdom and experience on which the CD can rely for guidance also in regard to its work programme for 1997. The delegation of Poland is determined to work to this end in close cooperation with other members of the Conference on Disarmament.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Secretary of State and First Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Poland for his statement and for the kind words he addressed to the Chair. I should now like to give the floor to the representative of Hungary, Ambassador Péter Náray.

Mr. NARAY (Hungary): Let me also start my statement by expressing condolences to the Chinese delegation on the passing away of Deng Xiaoping, who played an historic role in reforming China.

Mr. President, I wish to extend the warmest congratulations of my delegation to you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. It is a special pleasure to take the floor under the chairmanship of the representative of neighbouring Romania, with which our bilateral relations have received a major impetus after the recent entry into force of the Basic Treaty. I can assure you of the full support and cooperation of the Hungarian delegation, also in our capacity as Coordinator of the Eastern European Group, in all your endeavours.

Let me also pay tribute to your predecessor, Ambassador Joun Yung Sun of the Republic of Korea for his efficient leadership that has enabled us to adopt the agenda for the 1997 session of the CD.

I wish to welcome the statements by our two distinguished visitors today, Mr. McKinnon of New Zealand and Secretary of State Wyzner of Poland. Their participation has greatly enhanced our deliberations.

Situated in the proximity of a turbulent region, Hungary knows the value of peace and stability. Motivated by the sincere desire to create the framework conditions for a new and complex international security system, my Government constantly seeks to participate in cooperative efforts in this regard at the bilateral, regional as well as global levels. Thanks to these undertakings my country has contributed to stability in our area due to the consolidation of democratic institutions and sustained progress towards a full-fledged market economy.

At a time when the basic feature of international relations is the increasing interdependence of the players in the areas of security, economic and social relations, humanitarian and other affairs, multilateral diplomacy, including international organizations, has an important role to play in the solution of all major problems our world is faced with. We take the view that progress in promoting peace and stability facilitates the disarmament process and, on the other hand, success in disarmament negotiations has a tangible positive impact on international security. It is in this spirit that Hungary approaches the current issues of the disarmament and arms control process and the way they should be treated in the Conference on Disarmament this year. We are confident that there is a common ground for, and a shared interest in, elaborating a concrete programme of work. This should be balanced between the aspirations of the different constituencies of this body.

The aim to satisfy divergent expectations and priorities does not, however, justify the creation of artificial linkages. As shown by the experience of recent years, such tactics can only damage the efficiency and credibility of the CD. Our efforts should be targeted - with the ultimate objective in mind - at achievable and practical results, without creating situations where some issues will be bound to become hostages of other ones, to the detriment of the whole process.

This principle particularly applies to the field of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The general recognition of the need for and commitment to further systematic, progressive and steady efforts towards the elimination of nuclear weapons must be translated into concrete measures. The process has its own logic, it own sequence of steps and stages. Each achievement opens the road for the next one which, in its turn, also may advance the case further. My Government is reassured that the strengthened review process of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the decision on "Principles and Objectives" provide us with a reliable mechanism to promote this goal.

Hungary is committed to the implementation of what has been decided upon at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference. The conclusion of the CTBT negotiations is only the first major achievement in the further consolidation of the international non-proliferation regime. We call on all States to sign and ratify the Treaty as soon as possible in order to permit its early entry into force. Being included in the list of States annexed to article XIV, Hungary is aware of its responsibility and will act accordingly. The smooth start of the work of the Prepcom for the CTBTO and the PTS is also an essential ingredient of the process.

The strengthening of the norm of global non-proliferation of nuclear weapons requires additional urgent measures. The Hungarian delegation strongly advocates the commencement of work on a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT). As it was the case with the CTBT, the moratoria observed by the majority of the nuclear-weapon States indicate that this long-standing issue is ripe for serious negotiations. The Hungarian delegation has taken note of the divergent approaches to the question of existing stocks. Since the mandate contained in the Shannon report accommodates the different shades of opinion to that effect, the re-establishment of an ad hoc committee based on it seems to be within reach. We urge delegations to overcome procedural difficulties and get down to substantive work on an FMCT.

The Conference on Disarmament has won credit by negotiating several major treaties in the field of weapons of mass destruction. It is justified to continue this pattern. At the same time we cannot lose sight of the profound transformation of the international security agenda in recent years which put conventional disarmament into the limelight. The Hungarian delegation reiterates the importance of finding an appropriate place for this issue in the CD's programme of work. The resolve of the member States to address and solve really burning issues affecting the life of millions of people most immediately is put to the test.

One can hardly find a more challenging task today than the elimination of the roots of the tremendous humanitarian disaster caused by the large-scale deployment of anti-personnel landmines. Hungary has aligned itself with the Joint Action of the European Union of 1 October 1996, and stands ready to work actively towards the achievement at the earliest possible date of an effective international agreement to ban these weapons worldwide. This stance was further developed by a December 1996 resolution of the Hungarian Parliament on the subject. The legislature requested the Government to pursue this objective and support all related international initiatives, and propose negotiations on this problem with the countries of our region. The envisaged steps will be taken in addition to the export moratorium observed by my country since 1995.

Hungary seeks to raise the issue of a total ban on the use, production, stockpiling and transfer of anti-personnel landmines in a multilateral context. It was for that reason that we co-sponsored General Assembly resolution 51/45 S. As participants, we cannot but welcome the results of the Ottawa Conference and its follow-up meeting, held last week in Vienna. We believe that this process helps to create and maintain the necessary momentum to promote this case and build up the widest possible international support for it.

The CD's role in the concert of efforts aimed at a total ban should be considered from the point of view of the universality and efficiency of the future convention. Its composition, the presence of the major producers and exporters of APLs, as well as the available rich experience and expertise qualifies it for being an appropriate negotiating forum.

The Hungarian delegation supports the proposal to establish an ad hoc committee, as put forward by France. The draft mandate submitted by the United Kingdom delegation deserves serious consideration. We are flexible about a possible phased approach in order to comply with existing realities.

At the same time we would have serious difficulties with a mandate not stipulating a total ban on use and production as the ultimate goal of the negotiating process in the CD.

This Conference constitutes part of the multilateral disarmament machinery. Achievements in other related fields may influence in a positive way the atmosphere in this room, too. We look forward to the imminent entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention. This treaty has a comprehensive character and far-reaching political and security objectives. Its virtues, in full, will become apparent when implemented and implemented by all States with significance in this field.

The total prohibition of chemical weapons is supported by a complex and sophisticated verification regime giving assurance to States parties of full compliance, even in extreme cases. My Government has been actively promoting the objective of similar measures to be elaborated in the context of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention. Hungary, not only as a country honoured to chair the Ad Hoc Group but also as a State party interested in strengthening the BWC through an effective and workable verification mechanism, attaches great significance to the work of the Group. Drawing on the results of the sessions held in 1995 and 1996, and given the decision endorsed by the Fourth Review Conference to intensify its work, we are confident that the Ad Hoc Group will be in a position to fulfil its mandate within the agreed time-frame, i.e. as soon as possible before the commencement of the next Review Conference.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador Náray for his statement and for the kind words he addressed to the Chair. I should now like to give the floor to the representative of Indonesia, Ambassador Agus Tarmidzi.

Mr. TARMIDZI (Indonesia): Mr. President, since this is the first time I take the floor under your presidency, please allow me to sincerely congratulate you upon your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. We are all aware that the early stages of the work of the Conference have always been difficult. But, cognizant of the fact that you possess outstanding credentials, I am confident that you will be able to further capitalize on the praiseworthy achievements of your immediate predecessor, Ambassador Sun of the Republic of Korea, whom I should like to wholeheartedly thank for the excellent manner with which he conducted our previous work. My delegation will, certainly, pledge its fullest cooperation in order to help you discharge these demanding tasks.

I would also like to take this opportunity to convey my delegation's deep condolence to the Chinese delegation on the great loss of their prominent leader, Deng Xiaoping.

I also seize this occasion to welcome our newly arrived colleagues, the distinguished Ambassador Dembri of Algeria, Ambassador Campbell of Australia, Ambassador Chowdhury of Bangladesh, Ambassador Mernier of Belgium,

(Mr. Tarmidzi, Indonesia)

Ambassador Bold of Mongolia and Ambassador Leal of Venezuela. I trust that they will bring with them fresh ideas that will be most beneficial in revitalizing the work and productivity of the Conference on Disarmament.

My delegation would also like to warmly welcome amidst us in the Conference the Rt. Hon. Don McKinnon, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade and Minister for Disarmament and Arms Control of New Zealand, a country with which Indonesia enjoys cordial and excellent relations. I wish also to offer to His Excellency Mr. Eugeniusz Wyzner, the Secretary of State, First Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Poland our warm welcome. We have carefully listened to their keynote speeches. They, indeed, contain a web of resourceful elements which could, hopefully, give a strong new impetus to meeting the demanding challenges with which the Conference is now being confronted.

Today, I wish to limit my statement to nuclear disarmament, one of the hardest agenda items which the Conference on Disarmament has been addressing since its inception.

Taking into account the horrendous and devastating effects of these weapons of mass destruction, Indonesia has from the very beginning identified nuclear disarmament as one of the highest priorities in its foreign policy. Indonesia is indeed not unique in this regard. Almost all nations share the same strong viewpoints and, through many forums, such as the United Nations General Assembly, the International Court of Justice and, in fact, this Conference, they have made it abundantly clear that nuclear disarmament continues to be the most pressing task before us.

Indonesia has always been consistent in its policy towards nuclear weapons and nuclear disarmament. As one might recall, during the cold-war era, we questioned the utility and the use of these horrible weapons for obvious reasons. Today, when bloc politics and confrontations have disappeared and mutual understanding and cooperation among nations are being nurtured instead, Indonesia is even more determined than ever to see these weapons abolished while the window of opportunity is still open. It is our belief that at this juncture, in which nuclear war is hardly conceivable, the nuclear disarmament issue can no longer be brushed aside and treated as a trivial issue. As the embodiment of the world community's conscience and the sole recognized multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament, this Conference not only shoulders the primary responsibility for finding ways and means to really deal with the problem, but is also the most appropriate venue to commence the negotiations on a universal, effectively verifiable and legally binding multilateral treaty regulating the development, production, stockpiling and use of nuclear weapons and their destruction.

It is against these backdrops that Indonesia has always been supportive of all United Nations General Assembly resolutions calling for the global and total elimination of nuclear weapons under strict and effective international control. One might recall that Indonesia was also among those countries which presented the case to the International Court of Justice for its advisory opinion on the legality of the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. In the framework of the Conference on Disarmament, my country has also consistently supported proposals put forward by the Group of 21 for the establishment of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament, as contained in document CD/1388 of 14 March 1996, and the programme of action for the elimination of nuclear weapons tabled by 28 countries belonging to the Group of 21, as contained in document CD/1419 of 7 August 1996, to name a few.

At the regional level, Indonesia was among those which strongly supported from the very beginning the conclusion of the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (Bangkok Treaty) which, if implemented, together with the Treaties of Tlatelolco as well as Rarotonga and Pelindaba, will significantly contribute to the objective of achieving a world free of these appalling weapons. In this regard, my delegation strongly urges all nuclear-weapons States to accede to its protocol at the earliest possible date, thereby rendering the Treaty effective and implementable. I feel honoured to disclose before this august body that very soon, the Government of Indonesia will pass a national law ratifying the Bangkok Treaty.

These modest measures which we have undertaken are, indeed, testimony of our determined commitment to nuclear disarmament. I firmly trust that, if not all, an overwhelming majority of countries, particularly the States parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, have also faithfully undertaken similar actions. It is within this context that my delegation deeply regrets the recalcitrant attitude adopted by some of the nuclear-weapons States towards the need to immediately negotiate a treaty banning nuclear weapons. They have, instead, consistently denied their multilateral legal commitments to nuclear disarmament assumed under article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, which clearly stipulates: "Each of the Parties to the Treaty undertakes to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament ...". Worse still, there have been persistent efforts to narrowly interpret these multilateral legal commitments by insisting that nuclear disarmament is a bilateral exercise and, therefore, the sole domain of the nuclear-weapons States. And non-nuclear-weapons States should only confine themselves merely to the non-proliferation realm. If this one-sided perception continues, we feel that it will ultimately imperil the legal nature of the Treaty.

I would therefore venture to remind those nuclear-weapons States to be as prudent as possible, for it may lead to the unravelling of the Treaty to which we are all committed. For us, article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty is a legal multilateral endeavour and, coupled with the decisions taken during the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference, especially on the "Principles and objectives for non-proliferation and disarmament", should be honoured both in letter and spirit. We expect no more; we demand no less. And they indeed required prompt actions. The reference to "an early date" in article VI of the NPT cannot be construed otherwise as "for ever".

Much has been said on the need to establish an ad hoc committee to negotiate a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices (cut-off treaty). Let me, however, reiterate my delegation's position on this delicate issue. First, my delegation considers that the completion of such a treaty will significantly contribute to the continued and tireless efforts of the international community in preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons in all its aspects. Secondly, we view this cut-off treaty as a disarmament commitment as well. It should, therefore, encompass not only the future production but also the past production of these materials. We are fully aware of the sensitivity of making an explicit reference to past production in the mandate of the ad hoc committee as clearly highlighted in the Shannon report. My delegation, however, is of the opinion that brushing aside the issue of stockpiles would, once again, render the cut-off treaty a mere non-proliferation measure.

As a representative of Indonesia which has assumed immense non-proliferation legal commitments through inter alia article II as well as article III of the NPT and article III of the Bangkok Treaty, the cut-off treaty with such a characteristic has no added value to date. It is therefore unappealing to Indonesia. The mandate contained in the report of Ambassador Shannon indeed made no explicit reference to the existing stockpiles of fissile material, but it acknowledged that this issue to which many delegations attach great importance cannot be isolated with the Conference starts actual negotiations. It is with this understanding that my delegation stands ready to revisit the question of the cut-off treaty, using the Shannon report as a basis to begin.

After having reflected in a somewhat detailed manner on nuclear disarmament, I would be less than candid if I did not touch briefly upon the issue of anti-personnel landmines (APLs). We are horrified at being constantly reminded of the abhorrence and the destruction inflicted by landmines, especially on the peoples of the developing world. However, we think it falls more within the ambit of humanitarian issues. Indonesia, for one would not stand in the way of reaching an agreement on this issue being discussed if it is so wished by the Conference. Having said that, my delegation wishes to reiterate that this Conference should not be sidetracked from negotiating the highest-priority item in our agenda, namely nuclear disarmament.

Let me conclude by bringing to your attention the report prepared by the Canberra Commission and the statement of more than 80 renowned generals across the globe in which it is inter alia asserted that the nuclear weapons option is non-viable and that nuclear weapons have no military value. They have therefore called for the total elimination of these inhumane weapons from the world's arsenals. If these former first-class generals and eminent persons have come to such a crystal-clear conclusion, I believe we do not need to first retire from our posts as these renowned generals have in order to see the wisdom they have so aptly arrived at.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador Tarmidzi for his statement and for the kind words he addressed to the Chair. I should now like to give the floor to the representative of Ireland, Ambassador Anne Anderson.

Ms. ANDERSON (Ireland): At the outset, Mr. President, let me express warm congratulations and good wishes to you, also convey our thanks to Ambassador Sun and, of course, join in the condolences which have been expressed to the Chinese delegation.

In my statement today, I wish to address three questions: the challenge facing the CD in the nuclear disarmament area, the potential for work within the CD on anti-personnel landmines, and the issue of CD enlargement.

In the view of my delegation nuclear disarmament issues must remain at the heart of the CD's work; making progress on these core issues remains our top priority for 1997. We have all the ingredients for achieving progress if there is the necessary political will to do so. There is no shortage of material to work on. We have Ambassador Shannon's report including the mandate for an ad hoc committee on a fissile material cut-off convention; the G21 proposal for the establishment of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament; the phased programme of action for the elimination of nuclear weapons tabled by 28 countries; and the observations in September 1996 of the then Western Group coordinator on the CD's agenda.

Creating a wider context for our work, there is the document setting out the principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament adopted the NPT Review and Extension Conference in 1995. The Australian Foreign Minister has also commended the report of the Canberra Commission to stimulate our thinking and discussion. And there is an important acquis which should remain intact; the consensus in this room that the Conference should negotiate a fissile material cut-off convention on the basis of the Shannon mandate and report.

Despite all of this groundwork, progress so far has not been possible. Some delegations are reluctant to embark on an immediate negotiation on cut-off unless and until they have placed it in the context of an overall programme to achieve nuclear disarmament. In the words of the Japanese Ambassador, the so-called blueprint approach. In the words of others, linkage.

My delegation has on many occasions stated its concerns about linkages being made between parts of the nuclear disarmament negotiating process. Such linkages are usually counter-productive, more likely to engender paralysis than promote progress. We feel strongly that each proposal should be dealt with on its merits, taking into account its possible contribution to the achievement of nuclear disarmament, and not be viewed as a bargaining chip to promote other objectives, however worthy they may be.

Nevertheless, rather than simply decrying linkages, we have to try to understand why they are made and if there is anything that can reasonably be done to meet the concerns of those who make them. Why do some delegations here need reassurance about the direction we are taking? Have they lost confidence in the incremental approach to nuclear disarmament? Do they believe that we are seeking to negotiate only non-proliferation rather than disarmament agreements? Has there been a decline of faith in the ability of the nuclear Powers themselves to agree on further cuts in their arsenals?

The recent nuclear disarmament record is hardly so poor as to warrant such a loss of confidence. In fact, considerable progress has been made over the past decade. There have been unilateral measures on the part of the nuclear-weapons States, bilateral agreements between them and multilateral efforts in this Conference. We believe START I is a significant achievement in nuclear disarmament and we look forward to the ratification of START II by the Russian Federation and its early implementation. We also find the unilateral measures taken by Britain and France encouraging. And of course the conclusion of the CTBT was a historic achievement. The step-by-step approach to nuclear disarmament, using all possible avenues of negotiation, has achieved results important enough to justify the claim that this method has proven the most effective.

More, however, can be done to build confidence. The nuclear-weapons States are committed to systematic and progressive efforts to reduce nuclear weapons globally with the ultimate goal of eliminating these weapons. They are under a continuing obligation to demonstrate their determined pursuit of such efforts. In our view, it would help to create confidence in the process of nuclear disarmament if, severally or jointly, the nuclear-weapons States set out their perspective, and imbued the words "systematic and progressive" with meaning. This would be a confidence-building measure and could greatly help to enhance faith in the incremental approach to nuclear disarmament. Such a perspective need not be time-bound, but could be a reaffirmation on the part of the nuclear Powers of the process of nuclear disarmament through a broad elaboration of the next steps they themselves propose to take.

But back to the immediate procedural questions here. In a celebrated line, the Irish poet W.B. Yeats asked: "How can we know the dancer from the dance?" Although the poet's context was of course vastly different, I am reminded of the question by the CD's exhaustive debate over objectives and process. It seems increasingly difficult for some delegations to distinguish the process from the objective; they are becoming one and the same. We need to be clear. The objective is nuclear disarmament and the process we use to achieve this is not an end in itself.

The Conference is a negotiating body and the focus of all its efforts should be negotiations. It would surely be sensible for the Conference to establish a forum or a mechanism to enable it to consider the question of what nuclear disarmament measures it might negotiate in addition to, or after the conclusion of, the fissile material cut-off convention. That is, the Conference could seek to arrive at a consensus on those negotiating steps towards nuclear disarmament which might require a multilateral effort in the CD. The programme of action tabled by 28 countries could [illegible] just one proposal on the table in such a discussion. The discussion could also take into consideration the possible future bilateral or plurilateral efforts of the P5 and also the positions of the non-declared nuclear-weapons States.

The establishment of such a forum or mechanism for the consideration of the possible next steps in multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations would not constitute, in itself, a substantive step. It would simply permit the CD to develop a longer-term perspective on its future nuclear disarmament agenda. In the meantime the Conference should immediately, on the basis of the Shannon mandate, get down to negotiations on the fissile material cut-off convention.

The second issue which has attracted considerable attention from all delegations is the proposal that the Conference should initiate negotiations on anti-personnel landmines.

This is an issue of great concern to my Government. Ireland was one of the original members of the then very small group of countries committed to a global ban on anti-personnel landmines. Our revulsion at the horror and misery caused by these weapons is strengthened by many years of United Nations peace-keeping and the experiences of Irish development workers in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Rapid political progress towards a global ban on the use of anti-personnel mines was made last year. In October 1996 the Council of the European Union adopted a Joint Action, a key foreign policy instrument, which committed all 15 members of the EU to the goal of the total elimination of anti-personnel landmines. Also in October 1996 the Canadian Government convened the Ottawa Conference which adopted the Ottawa Declaration. As we know, this has set in train the so-called Ottawa Process which should result in a new international norm banning anti-personnel landmines in December 1997. The Vienna meeting, last week, added further impetus. Finally, the United Nations General Assembly adopted resolution 51/45 S, with 156 votes in favour and none against, urging States to pursue vigorously an effective, legally binding international agreement to ban the use, stockpiling, production and transfer of anti-personnel landmines with a view to completing the negotiations as soon as possible.

I have elaborated these developments to underline that the international effort to ban landmines is not just beginning now with preliminary discussions in the CD, but began some time ago. The effort has attracted strong and high-level political support from a large number of countries; it is overwhelmingly supported by the public, leading NGOs and a growing band of senior military figures. The fact that the issue has now emerged in the discussions on the 1997 work programme of the Conference on Disarmament is a further reflection of the political momentum behind the effort to achieve a global ban on landmines.

We have listened carefully to the views of many delegations concerning the involvement of the CD in this area. Like others, we have struggled with competing considerations to try to define our approach on the issue. On the one hand there is the argument that the Ottawa Process caters only to the like-minded; countries which do not face the difficult security concerns which impel others to justify the continued use of APLs on the grounds of legitimate self-defence. In this view, the Ottawa Process would produce a norm which would be subscribed to by a limited number of countries. It is suggested that any negotiation in the CD would be more likely to secure eventual universal adherence.

On the other hand, it is clear that the CD has among its members countries who have fundamental difficulties in accepting a global ban on landmines. These countries might need careful persuasion, over a long period of time, if they are ever to commit themselves to a ban. Moreover, the CD works slowly and not often with great transparency; it could provide many opportunities to the less than enthusiastic to slow discussion down to a standstill and to drain energy from discussions outside the CD. The CD does not include among its members many countries most seriously affected by mines. Neither does it have any experience of dealing with the humanitarian aspects of any convention banning the use of landmines. And smaller CD delegations might have some difficulty dealing simultaneously with two very different sets of negotiations - anti-personnel landmines and fissile cut-off.

On balance, we can see merit in the suggestion that the Conference should be given an opportunity, if it so desires, to turn the massive international support for a comprehensive ban on anti-personnel landmines into a concrete treaty text. However, we would wish to stress a number of key considerations conditioning our approach. Firstly, if the CD is to engage itself in this crucial issue, it must, as a starting-point, build on what has already been achieved in terms of international consensus on the way forward. Secondly, any negotiations on a ban on anti-personnel landmines must be comprehensive from the outset. In particular they must cover the central question of use. Thirdly, negotiations or attempts to initiate negotiations must take very seriously the words "as soon as possible" in the United Nations resolution. By this I mean that our commitment to negotiations or the launching of negotiations in the CD on anti-personnel landmines cannot remain open-ended. If the Conference on Disarmament is to play an important role in these negotiations it must move rapidly. If the Conference spends months talking around a mandate, further months discussing the modalities of the negotiations and yet more time on the scope of the convention, then the Conference will not respond to the humanitarian urgency implicit in the words "as soon as possible". Finally, the proceedings of the Conference must reinforce and complement other efforts, such as the Ottawa Process, which have already begun, which are working well and which have attracted a high level of international support. The Conference cannot conduct its negotiations in a vacuum. I must also stress again what I said at the outset: that we continue to believe that the primary focus of the CD's attention must be the resolution of the issues which inhibit the commencement of the negotiations on a fissile material cut-off convention.

Before concluding, I should like to address the question of the further expansion of the Conference. There are now 17 delegations seeking admission as full members. I believe the Irish application, which sadly will celebrate its fifteenth anniversary this year, heads the list. What does the Conference propose to do about all of our applications and when will it take action?

(Ms. Anderson, Ireland)

We are grateful to the many delegations who publicly have supported the case for early action by the Conference to deal with the remaining applicants and who privately have expressed support for our application. We believe that the early appointment of a special coordinator with a comprehensive mandate to deal with all of the issues raised by a further expansion of the Conference is the best way forward. We are conscious of the efforts which have been made to secure the early appointment of such a coordinator and, indeed, I noted your comment in that regard at the outset of our meeting today. We believe that the appointment of this coordinator should in no way prejudice the claims of the Group from which he or she comes to other coordinator posts to deal with other issues arising in the Conference.

The question of the further expansion of the Conference must not become yet another hostage in the negotiations over the future work programme of the Conference. The Conference on Disarmament is a unique body in the constellation of bodies which deal with multilateral negotiations. This body deals with issues of fundamental importance to the future security of the world. It seeks to negotiate agreements which are universally applicable. It is our strong belief that a body of this importance needs to have a transparent system in place for dealing with applications for membership. Outside the doors of this room, in the United Nations system which surrounds us, there are loud calls for reform, for openness and for modern methods of working. Is the CD to become a backwater, isolated from the tide of change which is washing through the multilateral system? Reform of antiquated working methods is an urgent requirement. Perhaps the task might begin with a more efficient and acceptable system of dealing with applications for membership. And perhaps this small reform might begin now.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador Anderson for her statement and for the kind words she addressed to the Chair.

(continued in French)

I would now like to give the floor to the representative of Switzerland, Ambassador Erwin Hofer.

Mr. HOFER (Switzerland) (translated from French): First of all I would like to express our deep sympathy and our condolences to the Chinese delegation for the painful loss of a great statesman.

This is the first time that the Swiss delegation has had the honour of speaking at this session of the Conference on Disarmament. As this coincides with your taking up the Chair of the Conference, Sir, before anything else I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you and to express the satisfaction which my delegation feels at seeing you guiding our work. We have no doubt that you will follow the path blazed by your predecessor, Ambassador Sun, who, thanks to perseverance which combined skill with imperturbability, enabled us last week to adopt an agenda which will form the structure of our work. I can assure you that we will spare no effort to support you in discharging your mandate at this crucial stage of the work of our Conference.

The Swiss Government is convinced that, in a logical continuation of the past activities of the Conference, an ad hoc committee should be set up without delay to negotiate a treaty on the prohibition of the production of fissile material for military purposes. I shall say no more about that now, but reserve the right to come back to this point.

The Swiss delegation would like to take up another subject, which was addressed in informal consultations conducted by your predecessor. This is the subject of anti-personnel landmines. Switzerland is well-known to be one of the most advanced States in this area. Since 1969, it has no longer been producing anti-personnel landmines or components for such mines. In 1990, anti-personnel mines were withdrawn from the equipment issued to troops. In 1994, the Swiss Government decreed a moratorium on the export of anti-personnel mines and their components to States which are not bound by Protocol II to the 1980 Convention on Conventional Weapons. In 1995, it decided to completely renounce the possession and use of anti-personnel landmines. The destruction of existing stockpiles of mines will be completed by the end of this year. For its part the Swiss Parliament adopted a law on 13 December 1996 prohibiting the development, manufacture, procurement as an intermediary, acquisition, transfer to anyone, import, export, transit or stockpiling of anti-personnel landmines or any other form of handling of such weapons.

We all know the approximate number of mines scattered throughout the world. We are not unaware of the human suffering provoked by these weapons every day and the economic and social damage they cause. Consequently no one disputes the fact that the international community must do its utmost to remedy this situation. Since the time factor is decisive, there is an urgent need to take appropriate measures, and specifically to ban anti-personnel landmines by means of a treaty. To be effective, the planned rules should cover, first, a ban on the manufacture, stockpiling, possession, transfer and use of anti-personnel landmines, and secondly, an obligation to destroy existing stockpiles of anti-personnel landmines. Switzerland has declared on several occasions, and confirms this today, that it is prepared to support any initiative along these lines and to participate actively in any discussion concerning an effective ban on anti-personnel landmines to take place in an appropriate framework. This is why Switzerland supported the initiative taken by the Canadian Minister for Foreign Affairs, His Excellency Mr. Lloyd Axworthy, last October, with a view to the rapid conclusion of a convention banning anti-personnel landmines.

Switzerland, convinced that the anti-personnel landmine problem calls for a speedy solution, is participating actively in the work forming part of the Ottawa Process. Thus it was that a Swiss delegation took part in the expert meeting held in Vienna from 12 to 14 February 1997. This meeting confirmed that, for an overwhelming majority of States, the humanitarian tragedy brought about by anti-personnel landmines must cease as soon as possible. It therefore represents an important and promising stage on the path which should lead us, by the end of this year, to the signing of an agreement banning anti-personnel landmines.

The Conference on Disarmament has made a highly appreciable contribution to international security. However, the idea that it might elaborate a treaty banning anti-personnel landmines is not gaining acceptance, because landmines are defensive conventional weapons. Nevertheless, Switzerland does not reject this prospect out of hand because it is prepared to discuss the problem of anti-personnel landmines anywhere and at any time. Should the Conference decide to form an ad hoc committee and to give it a mandate on anti-personnel landmines, the following points should be taken into consideration. First, the mandate of the ad hoc committee should refer to an agreement totally proscribing the production, stockpiling, transfer and use of anti-personnel landmines and requiring the destruction of stocks. Secondly, it is not acceptable as a matter of principle for the use of mines to be banned after other prohibitions have come into force (the phased approach). A ban on the use of anti-personnel landmines is the most urgent and immediately effective measure for the people concerned. Thirdly, the members of the ad hoc committee will have to bear in mind that the proposed instrument is more a matter of humanitarian international law than of disarmament law. It is therefore important to promote the protection of the individual rather than the interest of States in ensuring their own security, and not to give too much weight to verification and the universality of the future regime, elements which we know are of particular importance in the field of disarmament.

The Swiss delegation in no way objects to the Conference on Disarmament dealing with the problem of anti-personnel mines. However, it does consider that an instrument banning these weapons will be credible and effective only if it contains precise rules and if it is concluded rapidly. If the Conference can formulate a mandate within the proper time taking account of these requirements, Switzerland will be prepared to cooperate in the Conference with a view to the conclusion of such an agreement. But it is convinced that an agreement must be reached quickly, because the extent of the tragedy caused by anti-personnel landmines does not allow the slightest hesitation.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank Ambassador Hofer for his statement as well as the kind words addressed to the Chair.

(continued in English)

This concludes my list of speakers for today. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor at this stage? I give the floor to the representative of China, Ambassador Sha.

Mr. SHA (China) (translated from Chinese): Mr. President, the Chinese delegation offers congratulations to you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament for this month. We pledge to cooperate with you and your delegation in order to promote progress in our work.

The Chinese people's beloved Mr. Deng Xiaoping passed away as a result of illness at 21.08, 19 February 1997 in Beijing. He was 93. Mr. Deng was an outstanding leader of great stature among the people in all the ethnic groups in China. He was a great revolutionary, statesman, military strategist and diplomat. He was the chief architect of China's socialist reform and opening up to the outside world as well as its drive for modernization. He was also the founder of the theory of building socialism with Chinese characteristics. The glorious and epic life of Mr. Deng Xiaoping fully demonstrated that he was truly a great son of the Chinese people. He deeply loved his country and people. The Chinese people in turn loved him deeply.

The passing away of Mr. Deng Xiaoping represents an inestimable loss to our people and brought profound grief to them. They are determined to turn grief into strength and carry on the behest of Mr. Deng Xiaoping. They will express their grief by striving even harder through concrete actions in all fields of endeavour.

Under the firm leadership of the Central Committee of the Communist Party with Comrade Jiang Zemin as its core, the Chinese people will hold high the banner of Deng Xiaoping's theory of building socialism with Chinese characteristics and, with determination and confidence, bring to fruition the great cause of China's socialist reform, opening up and modernization initiated by Mr. Deng Xiaoping.

I should like to take this opportunity, on behalf of the Chinese delegation, to express our heartfelt thanks to you, Mr. President, to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade of New Zealand, to the First Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Poland and to my other colleagues for their words of condolence on the passing away of Mr. Deng Xiaoping.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador Sha for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. Does any delegation wish to take the floor? I see none.

As I announced at the beginning of the this plenary meeting, I should like to take up for decision the requests presented by Bolivia and Costa Rica to participate as observers, in accordance with the relevant rules of procedure of the Conference, in our work. These requests are contained in document CD/WP.484, which is before you. May I take it that the Conference agrees to these requests?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: The next plenary meeting of the Conference will take place next Thursday, 27 February 1997, at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 12.20 p.m.

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.757
27 February 1997

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE SEVEN HUNDRED AND FIFTY-SEVENTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva
on Thursday, 27 February 1997, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Grecu (Romania)

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 757th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

At the outset, I should like to extend a warm welcome to the newly appointed representative of Cuba, Ambassador Carlos Amat Fores, who is attending the Conference for the first time. I wish to assure him of our cooperation and support.

Towards the end of this plenary, I shall invite the Conference to consider the requests of Luxembourg and Kyrgyzstan to participate as observers in its work, in accordance with the rules of procedure, without first going through an informal plenary.

I have on my list of speakers for today the representative of Slovakia. I now give the floor to Ambassador Mária Krásnohorská.

Mrs. KRÁSNOHORSKÁ (Slovakia): Mr. President, please allow me to commence by congratulating you on the assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. It is a great pleasure to see a fellow representative of the Central European region in this office. I can assure you of my delegation's full support for your endeavours.

I should also like to pay a special tribute to your distinguished predecessor, Ambassador Joun Yung Sun, who spared no effort in looking for solutions and generally acceptable compromises in order to formulate the CD's agenda for 1997. If I may use his expression, he "left no stone unturned", and at last, thanks to his diplomatic skills and hard work, he found the right solution.

At the same time, I should like to extend my warm feelings to the Secretary-General of the Conference Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, his deputy Mr. Bensmail, and their staff, as well as the interpreters, for their valuable support and services. Lastly, I want to welcome the newly arrived colleagues and wish them all the best in their work and private life in Geneva.

I believe the positions of my country on the agenda and the practical work programme of the CD are quite clear. They have been made public several times by my delegation, as well as by the coordinator of the Eastern European Group at the Presidential consultations. Therefore I have so far felt no need to speak on the discussed issues. Nevertheless, we always honour the wishes of the CD Presidents. My statement today is therefore a reaction to your predecessor's appeal to all delegations which have not spoken yet during this session.

As usually happens after important achievements by international bodies, the crossroads represents a major challenge. The challenge requests of all the participants to analyse the past and look into the future with a certain distance and political wisdom. The Slovak delegation has followed the discussions on the CD agenda and work programme with great attention. Unfortunately, the progress seemed to be quite slow and painstaking, the positions of some delegations rather inflexible. We have sometimes been concerned by the spirit of non-confidence and, from time to time, confrontation. My country believes that mutual confidence, pragmatism and concentration on the issues that join us rather than those that separate us is the only way to proceed.

Slovakia many times spoke in favour of a modernized agenda. Unfortunately, it was not possible to reach consensus on its modernization at the present stage. We therefore supported the path suggested by the President and fully accepted the modified 1996 agenda as the "lowest common denominator". It is less than we wished but we fully realize how much effort the President invested in this affair. At the same time we have believed that the adoption of the agenda for 1997 is a fundamental prerequisite for the further work of the CD. Now we are, thanks to Ambassador Yung Sun, better off. Nevertheless, we are not over the water yet. The issue of the CD's work programme is no less contentious than the agenda. On the contrary, my delegation believes that especially the discussion on the working programme will verify the flexibility, readiness to compromise and political wisdom of its participants. In the heat of the debates we should remember that international public opinion is watching the CD proceedings very closely. The expectations are far from being low. The CD, as the only multilateral negotiating body on the issues of arms control and disarmament, should better meet them. It has no right to freeze all substantial progress due to a deadlock.

Special have been also the expectations of the Slovak Republic, which worked so hard to assume the post liberated by the former Czecho-Slovakia. It would be disappointing to start year 1997 by dragging consultations and postponement of the work on real problems that go beyond the walls of this room and concern millions of people. Let us get down to this work.

I have used this floor several times to express Slovakia's concerns about linkages being introduced between substantial elements of the CD's work. We still believe that such linkages are not likely to be helpful - on the contrary, there is a realistic threat that they will be counter-productive and endanger progress even on those items where it is possible.

Now, Mr. President, let me kindly share with you some comments and remarks on the subject of the CD's work programme. I want to re-emphasize that the CD is the only global arms control and disarmament negotiating body. It has therefore to deal with the most pressing issues. We believe that today these issues are the question of nuclear weapons on the one hand and conventional weapons on the other. The intensive consultations led by your distinguished predecessor Ambassador Yung Sun showed that within these two fields there are at least three issues commanding quite broad support, namely the fissile material cut-off, nuclear disarmament and the complex issue of anti-personnel landmines. Slovakia believes that the CD should concentrate on these issues.

After the completion and adoption of the CTBT, the CD should continue to play its primordial role. When looking for ways on how to meet this task in

(Mrs. Krásnohorská, Slovakia)

the field of nuclear weapons, we should start by the implementation of the "Principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament". In Slovakia's view, the CD should concentrate on the negotiations on the fissile material cut-off treaty as a further logical step on the path of nuclear disarmament. We believe that the FMCT ad hoc committee should be re-established without further delay. Special Coordinator Ambassador Shannon's mandate can serve as the basis of the ad hoc committee's work. The mandate is broad enough to meet all legitimate concerns.

In our view the CD should, at the same time, start a discussion in order to explore what further role it could play in nuclear disarmament and to identify the specific issues on which it could embark. An extensive and complex discussion on this issue is a prerequisite and should carefully lay the ground for eventual negotiations.

Concerning conventional weapons, in recent years it has become a cliché to state that since the Second World War, conventional weapons have taken a tremendous toll on human life. In the stricken countries regional or local conflicts caused disruption of States, their economies and social structures and often led to unprecedented humanitarian crises. One of the modern plagues causing this disaster are anti-personnel landmines. The reason is the incredibly high number of indiscriminately laid mines. Unfortunately, mines are inexpensive, easy to produce and use and their life-span is very long. On the contrary, mine-clearing is a very demanding and risky activity. Slovakia welcomed the international community's understanding of the growing humanitarian crisis and the start of action. In 1994 the Slovak Government confirmed that Slovakia does not produce any mines and, also in 1994, adopted a moratorium of unlimited duration on all transfers. Slovakia has participated in the multilateral efforts from the very beginning by co-sponsoring the relative United Nations General Assembly resolutions and supporting the strengthening of Protocol II to the CCW. Since last year it has also taken part in the Ottawa Process. I therefore believe that it will be no surprise if I reconfirm our interest in the landmines issue. We are of the opinion that the strengthening process of the CCW did not meet expectations. The problem of landmines has become so grave that every suitable possibility and forum is to be made use of, including the CD, for the promotion of the issue. Especially, if we are interested in the realization of a global and effective ban on anti-personnel landmines, supported by a simple but effective verification mechanism. We believe that the CD has the necessary experience and expertise to achieve this.

On the other hand, I have to emphasize that we do not perceive the opening of negotiations in the CD as an alternative to the Ottawa Process. We are of the opinion that these two processes should be complementary and mutually reinforcing.

Maybe I should recall at this stage the words of Mr. Alexander Downer, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Australia, who urged the CD to prove to those who do not believe that this Conference can deliver a treaty fast enough to meet the urgency of the humanitarian crisis that they are wrong.

Before concluding, I should like to address another important issue, namely the expansion of the CD. As a country that has recent memories of being an observer, we are full of understanding for the cause of the applicant countries. Slovakia many times stated that, according to its belief, the CD should be open to every applicant. Having in mind these two facts, Slovakia fully supports the idea of nominating a special coordinator for CD expansion with a broad mandate to explore possible modalities and ways forward.

In conclusion I should like to stress once again that the time for bold moves by the CD and its member States is ripe. I wish you all success in your efforts, Mr. President.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Slovakia for her statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor at this stage? I recognize the representative of Finland. Ambassador Patokallio has the floor.

Mr. PATOKALLIO (Finland): Mr. President, let me begin my brief remarks by congratulating you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. You can count on the full and active cooperation of my country in your important task.

My brief remarks will focus on one issue only: the issue of anti-personnel landmines. The issue of anti-personnel landmines has now been discussed within the Conference on Disarmament for several weeks. It is time to move from discussion to action. The international community is calling for concrete progress. The CD should respond to its call. The CD should prove to those who do not believe that this Conference can deliver the treaty fast enough to meet the urgency of the humanitarian crisis that they are wrong (and I am quoting the Australian Foreign Minister).

The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland stated in her address at the United Nations General Assembly last fall that the Conference on Disarmament, as the single negotiating body for disarmament of the international community, is the most natural forum for negotiations on anti-personnel landmines. Clearly, an increasing number of delegations at this Conference share her view.

The objective for Finland has been and remains to establish without delay an ad hoc committee on anti-personnel landmines. Its task should be to negotiate a global, legally binding and verifiable ban on these weapons.

At the opening session of the CD in January, Finland proposed the appointment of a special coordinator for anti-personnel landmines. I wish to repeat this proposal. The intervening weeks have convinced us even more that the appointment of a special coordinator is the most realistic and effective means to come to an agreement on the establishment of the ad hoc committee and to start negotiations.

I would like to ask you, Mr. President, to seek agreement now on the appointment of the special coordinator. His or her job would be to explore the possibility of addressing the issue of anti-personnel landmines in the Conference.

We hope that you, Mr. President, could reach an agreement on the special coordinator if not today, then by the next plenary. The coordinator should address the mandate and other issues related to the establishment of the ad hoc committee. Finally, I want to underline the sense of urgency. I believe that the coordinator should be tasked to report to the Conference before Easter.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Finland for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I would ask again whether any other delegation wishes to take the floor at this stage.

As I announced earlier today, I should now like to take up for decision the requests received from Luxembourg and Kyrgyzstan to participate, as observers, in the work of the Conference during its 1997 session. These requests are contained in document CD/WP.485, which is before us. May I take it that the Conference agrees to these requests?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: As you are all aware, on Tuesday evening, I completed the round of bilateral consultations with members of the Conference, with a view to proceeding to the next step of our work following the adoption of the agenda for the session, namely to develop consensus on the organizational arrangements to deal with the issues that are before the Conference.

I am in the process of making a thorough assessment of these consultations, the outcome of which will be brought to the attention of the members of the Conference in an appropriate manner.

I have appreciated very much the open way in which delegations expressed their views. I am, therefore, most thankful for the spirit of cooperation and understanding displayed by all delegations.

The consultations proved to be useful, allowing me to see better where delegations stand as far as their positions on three important issues are concerned: namely, on nuclear disarmament, the fissile material cut-off treaty and anti-personnel landmines, as well as, in some cases, on other issues of major interest to them.

Interesting ideas and suggestions have been expressed. But the main lesson that I have learned is that more work is needed in order to make tangible progress. I am ready to continue my efforts to this end in a manner consistent with the rules of procedure of the Conference on Disarmament.

This concludes my preliminary remarks on the bilateral consultations I held.

The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on Thursday, 6 March 1997 at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 10.45 a.m.

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.758
6 March 1997

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE SEVEN HUNDRED AND FIFTY-EIGHTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 6 March 1997, at 10 a.m.

President:	Mr. Grecu	(Romania)

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I call to order the 758th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

On my list of speakers I have the representatives of Cyprus and Mexico. However, before giving them the floor I would like to inform you that at the end of this plenary meeting I intend to hold a brief session of informal Presidential consultations open to participation by all delegations, at which I would like to pass on to you the preliminary results of the bilateral consultations which I have had with the members of the Conference concerning our programme of work and the organization of the session, following the adoption of the agenda.

As you know, the representative of Germany, Ambassador Wolfgang Hoffmann, is leaving the Conference following his appointment as Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization. Ambassador Hoffmann has represented his Government at the Conference for more than four years with competence and talent, upholding the positions of his country with courage and authority. We all recall the personal contribution which he made in 1993 when he chaired the Ad Hoc Committee on Prohibition of an Arms Race in Outer Space. I would also like to stress the major role which Ambassador Hoffmann played in the negotiations on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty in 1994 in the Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee's Working Group on Verification. We are also familiar with the contribution that he made as a Friend of the Chair during the final phase of negotiations on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, especially in the preparation of the document on the Preparatory Commission. Finally, I need hardly stress the way in which he presided over the work of the United Nations Disarmament Commission last year. Therefore, on behalf of the Conference and on my own behalf, I would like to wish Ambassador Hoffmann every success in his new responsibilities and assure him of our friendship.

I would also like to convey, on behalf of the Conference and on my own behalf, a cordial welcome to the representatives of non-governmental organizations present in the public gallery today. As you know, International Women's Day will be celebrated on 8 March, and to mark that event, in accordance with established practice, the community of non-governmental organizations will address a message to the Conference. I am sure that the Conference joins me in expressing our best wishes to all the women present in the room today and telling them that we greatly appreciate their steadfast commitment for peace and disarmament as well as their continued interest in our efforts.

Now I would like to give the floor to the Secretary-General of the Conference and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, who will read their message to the Conference.

Mr. PETROVSKY (Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations): I have the privilege to bring to your attention the following message from the International Women's Day and Disarmament Seminar to the Conference on Disarmament. I quote:

"Esteemed delegates,

"We are women from 22 countries, representing all continents, gathered in Geneva to discuss nuclear disarmament as our way to mark International Women's Day.

"We are glad that the Chemical Weapons Convention will enter into force by 29 April, and we urge those Governments who have not done so already to ratify this treaty. Furthermore, we recognize that START I and START II were significant steps on the road to nuclear disarmament, and we call on the United States of America and the Russian Federation to move to START III.

"Our International Women's Disarmament Seminars have for many years dealt with different aspects of the work of the Conference on Disarmament. This time we are focusing on nuclear disarmament which we consider of the utmost importance particularly in this year for the following reasons:

"Firstly, in 1996 the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty banning the testing of nuclear weapons in all environments for all time was signed. We congratulate the Conference on Disarmament on the completion of the CTBT and urge those States that have nuclear weapons or nuclear power plants to sign and to ratify it. We regret however that the treaty does not inhibit laboratory testing, therefore allowing further research and development of nuclear weapons to continue, and regret the absence of a concrete link to the wider goals of nuclear disarmament. For us, women peace activists from many countries who have mobilized and lobbied to stop nuclear testing, it is important that the CTBT Organization in Vienna will start its work soon. We will continue to monitor the ongoing work of the CTBTO to oversee the implementation and verification of the treaty. We wish success to those who are involved in this week's conference to establish the CTBTO and urge them to make provisions for constructive interactions with NGOs.

"Secondly, in 1996 the International Court of Justice declared that a 'threat or use of nuclear weapons would generally be contrary to the rules of international law applicable in armed conflict, and in particular the principles and rules of humanitarian law'.

"Thirdly, also last year, the Canberra Commission report on the elimination of nuclear weapons outlined a step-by-step programme for the abolition of nuclear weapons, stating that 'the only complete defence is the elimination of nuclear weapons and assurance that they will never be produced again'.

(Mr. Petrovsky, Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations)

"We call on you to use the momentum generated by these important events to take concrete action in 1997 on nuclear disarmament and to respond to the worldwide movement of people and public institutions demanding that all nuclear-weapon Powers reduce their arsenals to zero. More and more people are speaking out on what the peace movement has been saying for decades - namely that nuclear weapons diminish rather than increase military security. Like the chemical and biological weapons conventions, the time has come for a nuclear weapons convention.

"The fifty-first United Nations General Assembly called upon States to begin negotiations in 1997 on a nuclear weapons convention which would provide for nuclear disarmament in all its aspects, and you have put nuclear disarmament as the first item on your agenda this year. We call on you to take the next step and establish an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament to begin concrete negotiations on a nuclear weapons convention.

"We are conscious of the fact that the 21,000 nuclear weapons currently on our planet cannot be removed overnight. However, if the Governments are committed to transform the declared opposition to nuclear weapons into concrete political action, many ways can be found to reach complete nuclear disarmament within a reasonable time-frame. The April 1997 Preparatory Committee meeting of the States party to the Non-Proliferation Treaty will begin a new review process of the Treaty. Our hopes are high that this new review process, in line with the 'Principles and objectives' document agreed upon at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the NPT, will be an important instrument to bring nuclear disarmament closer. It could serve as a powerful support to the CD in negotiating a nuclear weapons convention. We can assure you of our support in these efforts. We are very active in preparing for the NPT Preparatory Committee meeting in New York, raising public awareness for this important meeting which we hope can contribute to the work of the CD.

"A comprehensive cut-off of fissile material would strengthen the existing non-proliferation regime and provide important progress towards the achievement of a nuclear-weapon-free world. Any attempt to control the potential use of weapon-usable material for weapon purposes has to include both military and civilian weapon-usable materials. We encourage you to continue with your efforts to establish an ad hoc committee to negotiate a treaty on the cut-off of nuclear-weapons-grade fissile material which includes an inventory of stockpiles.

"Finally we urge you again to consider enlarging the role of NGOs in the work of the CD. Our work represents the voices of many women around the world who are active at local and national levels working to strengthen awareness and action on disarmament. We would like to thank you for receiving our message once again. We wish you strength and all the energy for the work ahead of you. We can assure you of our full support."

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the Secretary-General of the Conference for reading the message from the community of non-governmental organizations on the occasion of International Women's Day. I now give the floor to the representative of New Zealand, Ambassador Armstrong, on behalf of the Western Group.

Mr. ARMSTRONG (New Zealand): Mr. President, may I first, on behalf of my colleagues in the Western Group, joint you in extending to a distinguished member of our group, Ambassador Hoffmann of Germany, our warm thanks for his considerable achievements during his time in Geneva, and our congratulations on his new role. We share fully the sentiments which you yourself have eloquently expressed in this regard, and we extend our best wishes to Ambassador Hoffmann, both as a colleague and as a friend.

On behalf of the members of the Western Group, it is my pleasure to extend a warm welcome to the organizations which have joined the CD today to mark International Women's Day. In particular, our thanks go to the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom for the message of encouragement contained in the address read by the Secretary-General. We have noted with special interest the points made about the ongoing efforts in this body to secure its work programme for 1997. A wide range of non-governmental organizations is associated with the statement we have just heard. The seminars they organize and their publications demonstrate clearly the interest which the work of this Conference continues to attract. Their ongoing work reminds us of our responsibilities in the field of arms control and disarmament.

Mr. de ICAZA (Mexico) (translated from Spanish): Mr. President, as I am taking the floor for the first time since you took over the post of President, I would like to take this opportunity to extend my sincerest congratulations to you. I should also like to express our satisfaction at the recent selection of Ambassador Hoffmann to head the secretariat for the CTBTO. We will miss his timely statements and his admirable legal judgement in this body. Our loss is the CTBT's gain. We wish our friend Ambassador Hoffmann all the very best for himself and his family in Vienna.

On behalf of the Group of 21 I would like to thank Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General, for reading the message from the community of non-governmental organizations on the occasion of International Women's Day on 8 March. On behalf of the Group of 21 I would like to thank the non-governmental organizations in question for their support for the cause of disarmament and the interest they have expressed in our work. In my Group we acknowledge the leading role which women play in the movement for peace, and we wish to assure them that all the delegations in the Group of 21 are firmly committed to general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control.

We take this opportunity to congratulate all the distinguished women who head or belong to delegations in the Conference on Disarmament, those working in the secretariat, and those in the interpretation booths who make our negotiations possible. Lastly, allow me to congratulate all women in non-governmental organizations for their statement today and for the support and encouragement for the positions taken by the Group of 21, particularly with respect to the objective of bringing about a world free from nuclear weapons.

Mr. NARAY (Hungary): I also would like to join those colleagues who have congratulated Ambassador Hoffmann on his election as head of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization. We wish him success in his new responsible post.

As was the case last year, the honour to make a statement on the occasion of International Women's Day on behalf of the Eastern European regional group is bestowed on my delegation. I can hardly find any more attractive task than to do this.

The Hungarian delegation has the honour to welcome, on behalf of the Eastern European Group in the Conference on Disarmament, the message from non-governmental organizations. We thank them for their interest and support they have given to our work. On behalf of my Group, the Hungarian delegation would like to convey to the representatives of the women's international organizations, as well as all women heads and members of delegations, secretariat staff and interpreters, our heartfelt congratulations on the eve of International Women's Day.

Mr. SHA (China) (translated from Chinese): First of all the Chinese delegation would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Ambassador of Germany, Mr. Hoffmann on being selected as the Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission for the CTBTO. His rich diplomatic experience and skills as well as his style of getting things done have left a very deep impression on all of us. The Chinese delegation fully believes that under his leadership the work of the future Provisional Technical Secretariat will proceed effectively. We wish him success in his work.

In two days it will be International Women's Day. The Chinese delegation as the Group of 1 in the CD wants to take this opportunity to express its warm congratulations to all women colleagues in the CD, ladies who are observing the proceedings of our meeting in the public gallery and women members of the secretariat who have worked so diligently for us. As an old Chinese saying goes, "If you do not respect women then you are not respecting your mother. If you do not respect your mother then you are not showing filial affection." Those who do not show filial affection will be unwelcome in society. They will even be spurned. As another saying in modern-day China goes "Women hold up half the sky." In fact, in all areas of endeavour, including disarmament, arms control and international peace and security, women have made an equally important contribution. The Chinese delegation wishes all ladies here health and happiness in their own lives and their family lives and hopes that they will be even more deeply involved in our work on disarmament and arms control so as to make a greater contribution to the safeguarding of international peace and security.

Mr. ZACKHEOS (Cyprus): The main purpose of my intervention is to express our hope and expectation that the pace of the substantial work of our Conference will be accelerated.

My Government greatly appreciates the enormous efforts made by the previous President and yourself, Sir, for finding a way to overcome existing difficulties. We realize, however, that progress can only be achieved if there is political will from all countries and groups of countries for a compromise. After all, compromise and negotiation are the essence of multilateral diplomacy.

A cut-off treaty on fissile material production is a logical step following the signing of the CTBT and should be given our utmost attention. The conclusion of the CTBT was an event of historic consequence. Countries that have signed should now intensify their ratification process. At the same time, we should stay in close touch with the countries that did not find it possible to sign. I wish to observe that the awareness of the inherent dangers in nuclear testing has been raised in our societies and it will be almost impossible for any country to conduct a nuclear explosion taking into account the consequences, including adverse world public opinion.

Equally important is the negotiation of an agreement banning anti-personnel landmines. The CD, without minimizing the importance of other forums and their possible positive contribution in furthering our common goal, guarantees that adequate consideration is given to all aspects and to all the preoccupations of actors in the international scene. My Government supports, in principle, the destruction of all anti-personnel mines placed along the ceasefire line in Cyprus, on condition of reciprocity. Let me underline that in situations of conflict, ratification of relevant arms control and disarmament agreements by all countries involved is a necessary prerequisite for their universal application.

Cyprus has, over the years, consistently supported the objective of complete and general disarmament, which addresses the security concerns of small States like ours, and we would welcome any efforts which will advance this noble cause. Cyprus was in the forefront of countries in the United Nations advocating consideration of the relationship between disarmament and development.

The first major achievement of the CD was the conclusion of the Convention on Chemical Weapons. It is a source of gratification that the Convention will enter into force on 29 April 1997. At the same time, it goes without saying that for the Convention to be fully effective it should have universal support and be ratified by all, including permanent members of the Security Council. Ratification by the major Powers will be a big boost to this historic disarmament and non-proliferation treaty, which totally prohibits chemical weapons including the means of their delivery. We believe that assistance, both technical and financial, for the destruction of chemical weapons stockpiles should be provided to countries in need.

We also support the strengthening of the Biological Weapons Convention through an effective verification mechanism.

I wish to take this opportunity to underline the importance of the proposal of President Clerides for the complete demilitarization of the Republic of Cyprus, which we consider as our contribution to efforts for conventional weapons disarmament. This proposal represents a genuine answer to the security concerns of all Cypriots. Moreover, its implementation will lead to stability in our sensitive region. The proposal has received widespread international support. We express the hope that serious consideration will be given to it in the efforts for finding a just solution to the Cyprus problem in accordance with relevant United Nations resolutions.

Turning now to the issue of the enlargement of membership of the Conference, I wish to join previous speakers in urging the appointment, as soon as possible, of a special coordinator. I believe that in the new international environment opportunities should be given to countries that wish to make a positive contribution to the work of the Conference. After all, the main activity of the CD is the elaboration of relevant conventions and treaties which we are all asked to sign and ratify.

In conclusion, on this auspicious occasion, on the eve of International Women's Day, I wish to place on record our appreciation to all women's NGOs for their untiring efforts and moral weight they bring in the field of disarmament.

I extend also our congratulations to Ambassador Hoffmann on his appointment and our best wishes for every success in his difficult but so important task.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Cyprus for his statement and kind words to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Mexico, Ambassador de Icaza.

Mr. de ICAZA (Mexico) (translated from Spanish): The delegation of Mexico expresses its satisfaction that the Conference, bearing in mind the relevant provisions of the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, has achieved consensus on its agenda for this year, following four weeks of intensive negotiations ably conducted by your predecessor, Mr. President, Ambassador Sun of the Republic of Korea. It is our understanding that the consensus achieved means that, as long as the consultations on the review of the agenda have not been concluded and without prejudging their results, the objectives, priorities and principles laid down in the 1978 document must continue to guide our negotiations and must be respected in the preparation of our programme of work. Although our agenda for this year contains seven items, we know that in practice the Conference could not simultaneously carry on negotiations on each and every one of them. In fact it is doubtful whether the Conference is capable of pursuing and bringing to a conclusion more than one set of negotiations at a time. Hence the need not to waste our limited resources by undertaking tasks which are not among the highest priorities or which would duplicate efforts undertaken in other multilateral forums.

Nuclear disarmament measures have the highest priority under the terms of the Final Document, which, as we have agreed, must guide our endeavours. It has been said that given the fact that the end of the cold war has reduced the threat of a nuclear holocaust, nuclear disarmament no longer deserves such a high priority. In this regard it must be pointed out that although the threat of a nuclear holocaust has diminished, no one can guarantee for how long, and it will persist as long as nuclear weapons continue to exist. But furthermore let us point out that in addition to the nightmare of the possible annihilation of mankind as a result of a global nuclear war, nowadays increasing concern has arisen regarding the reliability and safety of nuclear arsenals, and there is genuine alarm with respect to the control of the technology and the materials involved in the production of nuclear weapons. The risk of unauthorized or accidental launches has increased, and we are as close to possible catastrophes as we were during the East-West confrontation.

With admirable foresight, the authors of the Final Document declared that measures of nuclear disarmament should have the highest priority "until the total elimination of nuclear weapons ... has been achieved". International public opinion, organized civil society and the majority of the Member States of the United Nations have undertaken and taken a variety of initiatives with a view to the total elimination of nuclear weapons, in what is starting to resemble a general mobilization for the delegitimization of such weapons, the demonstration of the anachronistic nature of the doctrines which underpin them and the awakening of a new consciousness that existing arsenals continue to represent a threat to the very survival of mankind. In August last year, for instance, the Canberra Commission issued a report on the elimination of nuclear weapons which calls their military utility into question, highlights the risks of accidental or unauthorized use, affirms that possession stimulates proliferation and recommends practical and concrete measures for a realistic programme leading to a nuclear-weapon-free world. The report states that the first requirement is an unequivocal political commitment by the five nuclear-weapon States to the complete elimination of nuclear weapons and the immediate commencement of the necessary negotiations. We share that opinion. We also believe, as 61 retired generals and admirals from 17 different countries stated on 5 December 1996, that "we have been presented with a challenge of the highest possible historic importance - the creation of a nuclear-weapons-free world. The end of the cold war makes it possible. The dangers of proliferation, terrorism, and a new nuclear arms race render it necessary. We must not fail to seize our opportunity. There is no alternative".

However, the negotiation of measures related to nuclear disarmament are not only the highest priority in the sphere of disarmament, but also constitute an obligation. Let us recall that the International Court of Justice, in its historic advisory opinion of 8 July 1996, unanimously concluded that "there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control". The Court explained in sections 99 and 100 of its advisory opinion that the obligation contained in article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is an obligation to achieve a precise result - nuclear disarmament in all its aspects - and that this twofold obligation to pursue and to conclude negotiations concerns all States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, or, in other words, the vast majority of the international community. According to the Court, any realistic search for nuclear disarmament necessitates the cooperation of all States. In order to comply with this binding obligation, and considering that nuclear disarmament has the highest priority in the negotiations on disarmament, the Group of 21 has been proposing in this sole multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament the immediate establishment of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament.

The Final Document states that the achievement of nuclear disarmament requires the negotiation of agreements on the development and qualitative improvement of nuclear-weapon systems, cessation of the production of all types of nuclear weapons and their means of delivery and of the production of fissionable material for weapons purposes, and "a comprehensive, phased programme with agreed time-frames, whenever feasible, for progressive and balanced reduction of stockpiles of nuclear weapons and their means of delivery, leading to their ultimate and complete elimination at the earliest possible time". That is why, in March last year, the Group of 21 proposed that the ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament should have as a mandate the negotiation of a phased programme of nuclear disarmament for the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons within a specified framework of time. As you will remember, last year 28 delegations from member States of the Conference on Disarmament belonging to the Group of 21 presented a proposal for a programme of action for the elimination of nuclear weapons, and the United Nations General Assembly, in its resolution 51/45 O, when calling upon this Conference to establish an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament, urged it to take the programme of action into account.

The cessation of the production of fissile material for weapons purposes must be a genuine disarmament measure, linked to the cessation of the production of all types of nuclear weapons, as the 1978 Final Document lays down. Ambassador Shannon's 1995 report and the implicit mandate contained therein should make it possible for the ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament to discuss the cessation of the production of fissile material for weapons purposes as well as the problem of past production and the management of existing stocks, so as to make sure that all production of nuclear weapons will cease.

To sum up, the delegation of Mexico considers that in the drafting of our programme of work the highest priority must continue to be given to nuclear disarmament, and that we should reach an agreement which takes into account the different concerns of the member States by constituting immediately an ad hoc committee with a wide mandate which could include, first, the negotiation of a legally binding multilateral agreement which unequivocally binds all States to the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, secondly, the identification of measures necessary to achieve the complete elimination of nuclear weapons and the drafting of a phased programme with agreed time-frames, and lastly, the negotiation of a convention on the prohibition of the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons purposes.

My delegation has listened with great interest to the statements made in the plenary of the Conference, and in informal meetings, regarding the urgent need for a total ban on the use, stockpiling, production and transfer of anti-personnel landmines. We share the concern and sense of urgency inspiring those delegations which support a total ban on such weapons. The Government of Mexico considers that the use of this type of weapon constitutes a flagrant violation of international humanitarian law and that the only real solution to the problems that it poses is the total abolition of anti-personnel landmines and the destruction of existing stockpiles. The Government of Mexico does not produce or import anti-personnel landmines and maintains strict and constant surveillance of Mexican firms or companies which use explosive material and does not grant any permits for the production of anti-personnel landmines. Mexico is among the countries which endorse the need to make progress as fast as possible towards the prohibition of such weapons in all its aspects, and accordingly it calls upon Governments to accede to and/or ratify, as the case may be, the 1980 United Nations Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects, and its Protocols.

We have taken note with all due respect, since they have been put forward by delegations of countries with which Mexico has excellent and friendly relations, of the arguments in favour of negotiations on anti-personnel landmines being carried out by this Conference. Nevertheless, restrictions or prohibitions on conventional weapons which are excessively injurious or have indiscriminate effects should be negotiated in their proper context, which is that of the reaffirmation and development of international humanitarian law in general and the 1980 Convention in particular, review conferences for which can and should be prepared for in ad hoc meetings, inter alia with the help of the International Committee of the Red Cross. Conferences open to all are common practice in the field of international humanitarian law, and conferences expressly convened by individual countries have arrived at proscriptions and prohibitions on the use of conventional weapons which have secured universal acceptance. In the Ottawa Process we hope to conclude a legally binding international agreement this year to ban anti-personnel landmines and we are confident that, thanks to the snowball effect, we will establish a universal standard that will soon find general acceptance. We also hope that the Ottawa Process, in which we are actively participating, will not stop at the adoption of a legally binding instrument banning anti-personnel landmines but will continue as a group for the promotion of prohibitions on the use of or restrictions on other conventional weapons such as incendiary weapons, fuel-air explosives and munitions containing spent uranium, which could be considered in the next conference to review the 1980 Convention, scheduled to take place in four years' time.

The anti-personnel landmines crisis calls for urgent solutions. This Conference is not noted for the swiftness of its negotiations. Nor can it be said that the agreements we have arrived at here are assured of universality and the participation of "key States". Conventional disarmament can hardly be approached one weapon at a time, since, as the Final Document states, it must be carried out in a balanced and equitable manner so as not to allow any State or group of States to obtain advantages over others, and it should deal with balanced reductions of armed forces and of conventional weapons, with a view to promoting or strengthening stability at a lower military level. In contrast, bans on weapons that cause excessive suffering or have indiscriminate effects derive from the principle that belligerents should not cause their adversary damage out of proportion to the sole legitimate object of armed conflicts, which is to destroy or weaken the military potential of the enemy. Because the objectives which are pursued and the principles which are applicable are different in the field of disarmament and in the field of international humanitarian law, the General Assembly at its first special session devoted to disarmament entrusted the task of reaching agreement on conventional weapons which cause unnecessary suffering or have indiscriminate effects to a special conference of the United Nations, and not to this sole negotiating forum for disarmament. This forum has neither previous experience nor special expertise in humanitarian issues. As for the proposal that here in the Conference on Disarmament we should initiate gradual and phased negotiations on mines, the answer is that we have been doing so for the last 90 years, since The Hague Convention VIII relative to the Laying of Automatic Submarine Contact Mines. In 1974 Mexico proposed a ban on mines delivered from aircraft or remotely by artillery, since those are the mines which are used on a large scale in a scattered manner and have the most indiscriminate effects. In 1980 restrictions were placed on the use of landmines and in May last year, for the first time, the total prohibition of a landmine - the non-detectable anti-personnel landmine - was achieved. The time has come to ban all anti-personnel landmines, and to do so in the proper forum.

To sum up, as we stated in the First Committee of the General Assembly of the United Nations, we are not convinced that this is an appropriate forum in which to complete as soon as possible negotiations on an agreement to ban the use, stockpiling, production and transfer of anti-personnel landmines. The Conference on Disarmament must give the highest priority to negotiations on nuclear disarmament and should not embark on exercises which duplicate efforts that are being successfully pursued in other forums and which would divert us from the responsibilities which the international community has entrusted to us.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Mexico for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. Would any other delegation like to take the floor at this point?

Before adjourning this plenary, I would like to inform you that the next plenary meeting of the Conference will take place on Tuesday, 11 March 1997 at 10 a.m. At that plenary meeting, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden, Mrs. Lena Hjelm-Wallén will address the Conference.

I give the floor to Ambassador Hoffmann of Germany.

Mr. HOFFMANN (Germany): As this will probably be my last formal plenary, I have the urge to have the last word. First of all, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, and colleagues for your very friendly words of adieu. Over the last four years we have done considerable work together and we have even had some success. I thank all colleagues for all the cooperation and friendship they have extended to me. I thank the Secretary-General and the Deputy Secretary-General of the CD for their assistance. I thank the members of the secretariat for all the diligent work into our cause. I am now crossing the line to their side of disarmament affairs. This will be an interesting new experience. I noted with interest that the NGOs intend to verify the verifiers also in Vienna. I am looking forward to this.

My predecessor, when he left the CD, had prepared a farewell speech on the wall paintings in this Council Chamber, but he never made this speech. I will not do so either. I have sat on all four sides of this Council Chamber and, therefore, it is really time to leave. But in doing so, I think it would be appropriate just to drink to the health of the CD with delegates, with members of the secretariat and with NGOs. You will find the barriers in the ante-room probably a little inconvenient, but they are there due to the housewife in the soul of the United Nations Administration: the carpet has to be protected. All the same, I am grateful to Vladimir Petrovsky that he made this venue possible, so I invite you all to have drinks with me after the meeting in the ante-room and, of course, as a private meeting will follow immediately, the NGOs will have the first go at the drinks. In this case, it means "ladies first".

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank Ambassador Hoffmann for his statement. I would remind you that after the end of this plenary meeting I will hold an open-ended informal session of Presidential consultations in this same room, after a brief pause.

The meeting rose at 11.15 a.m.

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.759
11 March 1997

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE SEVEN HUNDRED AND FIFTY-NINTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Tuesday, 11 March 1997, at 10 a.m.

President:	Mr. Grecu	(Romania)

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 759th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

Allow me at the outset to extend a warm welcome, on behalf of the Conference and on my own behalf, to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden, Her Excellency Lena Hjelm-Wallén, who will be our first speaker today. We had the privilege of receiving the visit of the Foreign Minister of Sweden last year, and her presence among us today is a further testimony of her personal interest in our work and the abiding importance attached by her Government to the Conference on Disarmament. I am sure that her statement will be followed with great interest by all of us.

I now give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden, Her Excellency Lena Hjelm-Wallén.

Mrs. HJELM-WALLEN (Sweden): Mr. President, may I first of all congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the CD? I would also like to pay my respects to the Secretary-General, Vladimir Petrovsky, and his deputy, Mr. Bensmail, and express our gratitude for the assistance they provide members and observers to the CD.

Profound changes in the security environment have created radically new and positive conditions for building a safer and more secure world. It is not possible to build a sustainable security order and lasting peace on the threat of weapons of mass destruction. The quest for a nuclear-weapon-free world is about fundamental values and political will. It is about the world we want to create for ourselves and future generations, a world where the destructive power of these weapons no longer threatens our civilization.

On 10 September 1996, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty by an overwhelming majority and opened it for signature. The Treaty was signed on the very first day by all the five nuclear-weapon States. I had the great pleasure to sign it that day, too, on behalf of Sweden. To date, the Treaty has more than 140 signatory States.

The CTBT constitutes a landmark event in the field of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The solid support for the Treaty testifies to the strong will of the international community to put an end to all nuclear weapon test explosions or any other nuclear explosion. It confirms that nuclear weapons, pyschologically and politically, have become yesterday's weapons

We must now ensure the early entry into force of the Treaty. The CTBT was negotiated here in the Conference on Disarmament. I urge those States in the CD that have not already done so to shoulder their responsibility and to sign the Treaty as soon as possible.

The Swedish Government welcomes the results of the resumed first session of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization. The decisions taken last week here in Geneva have laid the necessary groundwork for beginning the work in Vienna. Sweden intends to actively contribute to this work, and I am pleased that Dr. Ola Dahlman has been appointed Chairman of the Working Group in charge of verification issues under the PrepCom.

The CD should now start negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, the cut-off. This is the next urgent task. Already in 1995, the Conference adopted a statement containing a mandate for cut-off negotiations. It also decided to establish an ad hoc committee for this purpose.

The time has now come to proceed to substantive work. I urge all delegations to show the necessary flexibility to get these negotiations started without further delay. It is highly important that the CD meet the expectations placed on it by the international community.

The "Principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament" adopted by the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference also call for the immediate commencement and early conclusion of such negotiations. A cut-off treaty would once and for all put a cap on the fissile material available for weapons purposes. It would create further favourable conditions for the reduction of nuclear arsenals. Such a treaty is thus of the highest significance both for continued nuclear disarmament and for nuclear non-proliferation.

Significant steps have been taken in the field of nuclear disarmament. I have in mind the INF Treaty, the START I and II agreements. The nuclear-weapon States have, furthermore, taken important unilateral measures. However, the existing nuclear arsenals are still greatly disproportionate to any actual or conceivable threats. The nuclear disarmament process must therefore continue unabated.

The nuclear-weapon States have, indeed, a great responsibility. A situation where these States insist on the security benefits of nuclear weapons, while reserving to themselves the right to possess such weapons, is not sustainable.

START II should be ratified without delay. This would enable its implementation and pave the way for additional deep reductions of the United States and Russian nuclear arsenals, which in turn would create a basis for the participation of all the nuclear-weapon States in the reduction process. The Swedish Government urges the United States and Russia to spare no efforts to overcome the present difficulties and proceed towards a START III. We hope that the summit meeting later this month between President Clinton and President Yeltsin will give an important impetus to this process.

In August last year, the Canberra Commission delivered its report. The Government of Australia subsequently circulated it in the United Nations General Assembly. It was also presented to the CD earlier this year by the Foreign Minister of Australia, Mr. Alexander Downer.

The importance of the Commission's report is that it sets out a way forward through a series of concrete measures towards a nuclear-weapon-free world. These are measures to be taken by the nuclear-weapon States, as well as by the international community. Furthermore, they are mutually supportive and can be pursued in parallel. I propose that the CD devote some of its time during this year's session to the consideration of this report. The proposals contained in the report deserve to be explored.

One step proposed by the Canberra Commission is to take nuclear forces off alert. This step could and should be taken immediately by the nuclear-weapon States. Such a measure would greatly reduce the risk of an accidental or unauthorized nuclear weapons launch. It would also constitute an important confidence-building measure. Furthermore, it would facilitate the implementation of another of the Commission's proposals, namely, to remove nuclear warheads from their delivery vehicles.

Sweden believes it would be useful to establish some mechanism within the CD to discuss broader aspects of nuclear disarmament. This could be in the form of an ad hoc committee or a special coordinator or informal plenary meetings devoted to this subject. The form is not important. What matters is to have some kind of mechanism which enables a focused discussion on these issues.

The Swedish Government attaches great importance to the upcoming preparatory work for the next NPT Review Conference in the year 2000. The annual PrepCom meetings will provide an opportunity to review on a regular basis the implementation of the Treaty. However, the work must also be forward-looking.

In particular, the concept of systematic and progressive efforts by the nuclear-weapon States to reduce nuclear weapons globally, with the ultimate goal of eliminating those weapons, must be given a concrete content. The steps must be identified and fully translated into action.

In July last year, the International Court of Justice expressed itself in an advisory opinion on the legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons. It did so at the request of the United Nations General Assembly. The Court stated, inter alia, that "there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control". This unanimous conclusion by the Court constitutes a strong and clear message.

I also wish to draw attention to the recent joint statement made by some 60 retired high-ranking military officers from the United States, Russia and other countries. They stressed that present and planned stockpiles of nuclear weapons are exceedingly large and should now be greatly cut back. Remaining nuclear weapons should be gradually and transparently taken off alert. Long-term international nuclear policy must be based on the declared principle of continuous, complete and irrevocable elimination of nuclear weapons.

Their statement is highly significant, not only because of its content but also because of the persons who stand behind the message. It is an important call for intensified efforts towards nuclear disarmament.

Important developments are now taking place in the non-nuclear fields. On 29 April, the Chemical Weapons Convention, negotiated in this forum, will enter into force. This Convention will prohibit an entire category of weapons of mass destruction and provide for the destruction of these weapons. It is a deplorable fact that the United States and Russia - the two declared possessors of chemical weapons - have not yet ratified the Convention. The absence of their ratifications would limit this important international treaty to a non-proliferation regime. This would not be compatible with its overall objective to erase a whole class of weapons of mass destruction from the face of the Earth and could also jeopardize further progress in other areas of disarmament and non-proliferation. The Swedish Government strongly urges the United States and Russia to shoulder their responsibility and ratify the Convention before its entry into force.

The Swedish Government welcomes the fact that work has now started on the elaboration of a verification regime for the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention. This is a highly important step for the strengthening of this Convention. The negotiations in the Ad Hoc Group charged with this task should proceed as swiftly as possible. They should aim at the conclusion of the work in 1998.

By their very nature, nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction must be accorded highest priority on the international disarmament agenda. But we must also deal with the fact that every year tens of thousands of persons fall victim to conventional weapons. Anti-personnel landmines belong to this category. We all know the disastrous effects of the use of these weapons.

For the last 15 years, Sweden has neither exported nor produced anti-personnel landmines. Furthermore, Sweden decided last year to prohibit the use of anti-personnel landmines by its armed forces and to destroy its stocks of such mines as soon as possible, but no later than the year 2001.

The international community can no longer permit that civilians - women, men and children - are killed by the thousands every year by these hideous weapons. Nor can it permit that even more victims become disabled for life, often condemned to long suffering and social hardship. Nor can it allow entire countries or regions to become economically paralysed by the vast presence of landmines in their fields and roads. The only effective solution to the landmine crisis is a total ban on APLs. No more, no less.

The international community must spare no efforts to achieve a comprehensive, effective and legally binding international ban, covering production, stockpiling, transfers and use. Partial measures will not solve the problem. We must aim for a total prohibition, and we must achieve this objective as soon as possible. This process should involve the broadest possible range of States, including States particularly plagued by the use of these mines, producers and exporters. Sweden will work actively in all suitable forums. We participate in the Ottawa Process and are ready to do so in the CD.

While working towards a total ban, it is, at the same time, of utmost importance that States adhere to the amended Protocol II of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. This Protocol places significant new restrictions on the use of all landmines. By standing firmly behind the Protocol, the international community will take an important stride forward in dealing with the scourge of the indiscriminate use of these mines. Last week, the Swedish Government took the decision to submit to Parliament the bill on Sweden's ratification of the amended Protocol. The ratification is foreseen to take place before the end of June.

The international community must also tackle the problem of the approximately 100 million landmines already deployed. It faces, indeed, a humanitarian demining task of gigantic proportions. Ongoing efforts in this field are far too slow, costly and dangerous. New and more efficient methods must be developed. The Swedish Government has decided to establish, later this year, a demining centre which will contribute to international demining efforts and be a focal point for research on, and development of, new demining techniques.

The international community must, furthermore, significantly increase its resources for mine awareness programmes and victim assistance. These are tasks which call for urgent action and to which undivided attention and energy must be devoted.

The existing window of opportunity for carrying the disarmament process forward must be utilized to the fullest extent possible. Work must proceed with a sense of urgency. The CD has an important role to play. This Conference has, indeed, proven its value. The Chemical Weapons Convention and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty are impressive achievements in recent years.

Important tasks lie ahead. The CD is already several months into its 1997 session. Political will must now be demonstrated and substantive work started.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden for her important statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor at this stage? I see none.

I intend to hold informal open-ended Presidential consultations immediately after this plenary meeting.

The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held next Thursday, 13 March at 10 a.m. We shall meet in an informal setting after a 10-minute break.

The meeting rose at 10.35 a.m.

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.760
13 March 1997

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE SEVEN HUNDRED AND SIXTIETH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 13 March 1997, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Grecu (Romania)

The PRESIDENT: The 760th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament is called to order.

I have on my list of speakers for today the representative of Austria. I now give the floor to the representative of Austria, Ambassador Kreid.

Mr. KREID (Austria): Mr. President, since your term of office is heading towards its conclusion, I not only want to congratulate you on the assumption of your presidency, but I should also like to take this opportunity to thank you for the efforts you have made to sound out possible avenues of compromise among ourselves.

A sober reflection of where we stand tells us that such avenues of compromise are not yet in sight. We have heard more about what divides us than about what unites us. I still believe that it is important to continue defining our positions as we move along. For if it is true that we have not found the common ground on which to build together, it is no less true that our positions have not remained unchanged. There is movement and this means there is creative thinking, and as long as there is creative thinking our chances of coming up with a viable solution are intact.

As others before me, I believe it appropriate to concentrate in my statement on the subject matters which have emerged as priority concerns in our discussions, namely anti-personnel landmines and the various aspects of nuclear disarmament. Let me start with the issue of anti-personnel landmines, where Austria's position can be resumed in one single sentence: We want a total ban and we want it fast. We believe that the momentum created in the wake of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons Review Conference in Geneva last year should be used for negotiations on a total ban convention in a format that allows for their successful conclusion before the end of the year.

We are greatly encouraged by the fact that the member countries of the European Union are fully committed to this goal and that the United Nations General Assembly, with 150 votes in favour and none against, adopted last fall a resolution in which urgent and vigorous measures for the conclusion of an effective, legally binding international agreement leading to a comprehensive ban on the use, stockpiling, production and transfer of APLMs are called for. We are also greatly encouraged by the response of Governments to the Canadian initiative, which saw the beginning of a process commanding the support of a growing number of States. This fact became apparent in the meeting held in Vienna from 12 to 14 February. There were 111 participating States, a number which speaks for itself. To be sure, this number does not tell us anything about the views these States hold on the question of a total ban, but it can certainly be interpreted as a strong signal that Governments around the world are alert to the problem and willing to take action.

During the general debate 44 speakers took the floor and an overwhelming majority of them supported the adoption of a total ban convention. In the subsequent exchange of views on the main elements of a draft treaty text about 70 countries intervened and contributed a wealth of proposals. These proposals are being given due consideration in the process of revising the

Austrian tentative draft. It is our intention to send out a revised version of the Austrian draft to all States by the end of March for further comments.

The Vienna meeting did not solve, nor was it meant to solve, the question of where we should negotiate. As we stated earlier, Austria is willing to pursue various tracks provided they hold promise of success. Having carefully registered what has been said and also what has not been said on the subject here in the CD during the last weeks, we have reasons to believe that we are up against some major obstacles in this Conference. Drawing inspiration from Andrew Marvell, I am prompted to say: "Had we but world enough, and time, our hesitations were no crime", but given that the "hidden killers" take a toll of 25,000 victims year by year, and that the fast-track approach commands the support of so many Governments, the CD cannot simply ponder the matter in its customary slow-motion fashion.

We are not willing to submit to a strategy of long-term persuasion complete with trade-offs and linkages and subject to an unpredictable stop-and-go process. We consider the issue as solvable, and it should be solved now, and it should be solved in a straightforward manner. The train is about to leave the station. The CD could still get on it, but it is getting more difficult every moment as impatience is growing.

Of course, there is always a danger that not all of the passengers whom we would have liked to have with us will be on board. But this is a fact we have to live with. Just like the Ottawa Process, the CD could not count on the participation of all the countries directly affected by the evil of anti-personnel landmines either. Thus, we might find ourselves in the unpleasant situation of having, at least for the time being, to forgo universality in order not to end up empty-handed or with ineffective solutions.

We believe, however, in the importance of establishing a universal norm by means of a law-making treaty and we are confident that this treaty will meet with general adherence in due course. This is not the first time in the history of international law that a group of countries decides to go ahead with an agreement which subsequently gains universal validity. Such has been the case with regard to The Hague Conventions as far as humanitarian law is concerned. But there are also examples in the field of disarmament, such as the Partial Test-Ban Treaty, where an initiative taken by a few countries was later endorsed by many others.

One final remark. We do not share the apprehensions of some delegations that the CD must keep away from APLMs because this is a matter of humanitarian law only. True enough, a treaty on APLMs has strong humanitarian components. At the same time, we should not lose sight of the fact that banning a defensive weapon carries with it a strong disarmament dimension as well. To recognize from the very beginning this straddling character of the APLM convention seems to us of some importance for its future implementation.

Let me now turn to my second topic, namely nuclear disarmament, and state at the very outset that we have no reason to be despondent as to the progress achieved in this field. Certainly, we have not yet come to the end of the tunnel, but at least we can see a distant light of hope. This hope is epitomized by the acronyms NPT, CTBT, START I and START II, and by names like Tlatelolco, Rarotonga, Bangkok or Pelindaba.

It may well be argued that past advances were slow, perhaps even haphazard, lacking in systematic planning and blueprints. But they are nonetheless real, they are nonetheless reassuring, and they tell us, above all, one thing: Let us move on and let us not be too choosy and over-ambitious. Rather, let us take what we can get now. So if we are not able to solve the daunting issue of nuclear disarmament in one great stroke now, let us attend to what is feasible and in doing so add another valuable facet, namely a treaty on fissile material cut-off (FMCT), to this multifaceted edifice.

It is said that an FMCT would not be a genuine disarmament treaty, that it would mainly serve the purpose of nuclear Powers and perpetuate the inequality between the nuclear-weapon haves and have-nots. We believe that this is at least an incomplete, if not an erroneous, view. A cut-off treaty would, in our opinion, create far-reaching effects on nuclear disarmament. It would make existing unilateral commitments of nuclear-weapon States to end their production an obligation under a multilateral treaty and open the door to verification measures. Negotiations would inevitably have to touch upon the question of stockpiles, even if they would remain outside of the treaty, because it is hard to see how a cut-off could be verified without transparency with regard to existing stockpiles. Considering that today nuclear arms competition has shifted from the East-West conflict to other regions of the world, the treaty, by improving transparency and confidence, could attain importance also in a regional context. To borrow the words of an Indian diplomat, an FMCT would "reinforce the trend of moving towards a nuclear-weapon-free culture". It would put a sticker on fissile material for nuclear explosions which would not only read: "Keep off: radioactive radiation", but would also read "This material is not only dangerous, it is superfluous". The excess capacities in plutonium and highly enriched uranium are staggering indeed.

After the end of the East-West confrontation a window of opportunity for nuclear disarmament has opened. As the report of the Canberra Commission states, "it must be exploited quickly or it will be lost. There has been no better opportunity since the beginning of the nuclear age". But the Canberra Commission also approached this subject pragmatically. It proposed to proceed in a step-by-step fashion in order to move in a first phase towards a "low-salience nuclear world".

How could that be reflected in our work? Could we start to negotiate a cut-off and, at the same time, set up some kind of mechanism to examine what nuclear disarmament measures could usefully be negotiated in the CD in addition to, or after the conclusion of, the fissile material cut-off convention, in accordance with the "systematic and progressive" efforts at reduction to which the nuclear-weapon States pledged themselves under the NPT "Principles and objectives"? Those among us who plead for such a course should, however, be fully cognizant of the fact that the very subparagraph 4 (c) of the above-mentioned "Principles and objectives" also refers to the need for simultaneous pursuit "by all States of general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control".

There is a magic word in international negotiations and it is the word balance. To achieve balance, there must be weight on both scales, the nuclear and the conventional. Have we, so far, put sufficient weights in the scales on each side, and if not, should we not try to be a little bit more concerned with living up to our responsibility to make this world a safer and therefore a better place to live in? The newest play by Austria's foremost living writer Peter Handke is entitled "Arming for immortality". Whichever route we follow, without disarming first we cannot hope to come close to this goal.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Austria for his statement and the kind words addressed to the Chair.

That concludes my list of speakers for today. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor at this stage? I see none.

As you are aware, this is the last plenary under my presidency. Therefore, I should like to end my term of office with a few closing remarks.

It has been an honour and an enriching experience for me to preside over this august body, since disarmament is an issue to which my Government attaches great importance. My presidency thus constituted an opportunity to demonstrate once again Romania's will to join those looking for timely, realistic, far-reaching and long-lasting solutions in this field. During last month I was in a position to encourage actively and, sometimes, promote such solutions.

While leading the proceedings, I largely benefited from the wealth of talent and expertise our Conference encapsulates. I should therefore like to thank all of you for your cooperation and readiness to discuss all the complex issues lying in front of the Conference on Disarmament today, as well as for the interesting and constructive suggestions you have put forward during this period.

In my turn, I reciprocated by exerting all my energy, good will and perseverance throughout my entire tenure as President, which happened to coincide with a particularly difficult and frustrating period in the life of our Conference.

For the first time since the enlargement of the Conference on Disarmament intensive bilateral consultations were held with all the delegations who have made themselves available for this purpose, in an attempt to reach consensus on a programme of work and institutional arrangements for this session. In my judgement, this way to proceed was the most suited in order to give everybody an opportunity to address outstanding issues facing the Conference directly with the President. Each of those issues was approached on its own merits, a tactic meant to avoid unproductive linkages and to get the Conference out of the current stalemate.

(The President)

Soon after the completion of this round of bilateral talks, I informed the membership about my findings and announced my intention to continue seeking avenues for narrowing down the existing gaps. I did so in all earnestness bilaterally, with groups of delegations, and in two successive rounds of multilateral, open-ended Presidential consultations and, as always, with a grain of pondered optimism.

Although we did not fulfil the expectations we all put in our work, I strongly believe that the exercise was useful to air different opinions, to indicate where divergences lie and to reveal possible ways of compromise.

It seems premature to me to draw conclusions at this stage. Instead, I am convinced that further consultations are needed, maybe in other formats and modalities, by advancing fresh ideas, but aiming at the same result, that is, to alleviate obstacles still lying ahead. I intend to continue consulting delegations up to the very end of my term of office.

I do not want to conclude my statement without reiterating my gratitude to the group coordinators and the delegation of China for their constant availability, the support and advice they have given me. A special word of thanks also goes to Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, to his deputy, Mr. Abdelkader Bensmail, and all the secretariat for the friendly and effective manner in which they have helped us in our endeavours.

Finally, I wish Ambassador Grigori Berdennikov of the Russian Federation every success in the task he will be carrying out as of next week, and I should like to assure him of my full cooperation.

This concludes my closing remarks and I thank you for your attention.

The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on Thursday, 20 March at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 10.45 a.m.

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.761
20 March 1997

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE SEVEN HUNDRED AND SIXTY-FIRST PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva
on Thursday, 20 March 1997, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Berdennikov (Russian Federation)

The PRESIDENT (translated from Russian): I declare open the 761st plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

First of all I should like to express gratitude to my predecessors in the Chair, Ambassador Sun of the Republic of Korea and Mr. Grecu from Romania, for all the efforts they made to get today's meeting off to a smooth start. I would also like, on behalf of the Conference and on my own behalf, to extend a very warm welcome to the State Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Norway, Mrs. Siri Bjerke, who will be the first speaker at today's meeting. Her presence among us yet again today testifies to the continued interest of her Government in our work and the importance it attaches to the multilateral approach to arms control and disarmament.

I also have on my list of speakers today the representatives of Italy, Switzerland, Iran and the United States of America.

As we all know, two of our distinguished colleagues, Ambassadors S. Ledogar of the United States and A. Vattani of Italy, will soon be leaving the Conference. Ambassador Ledogar has represented his country in this Conference for more than seven years with remarkable diplomatic skill and talent. We all remember his outstanding personal contribution to the negotiations on the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty, and we give him his due for his human qualities. Ambassador Vattani successfully steered the Conference at a difficult time, and we all owe him a debt of gratitude for his efforts to lay the ground for substantive work at the start of the 1995 session. I am sure I speak on behalf of all of us in wishing Ambassadors Ledogar and Vattani and their families happiness and every success for the future.

Before giving the floor to the speakers on the list, I should like in my capacity as representative of the Russian Federation to read out a letter addressed to the participants in the Conference by the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs, E. Primakov, in connection with the accession of a representative of Russia to the post of President of the CD.

> "Greetings to the participants in the session of the Conference on Disarmament.
>
> "The activities of the Conference on Disarmament - the sole forum in which practical talks on disarmament issues are conducted on a multilateral basis and in a global framework - are followed with attention and interest in Russia. Our country strives to contribute to the success of the work of the Conference, whose achievements have earned it well-deserved authority in the eyes of the world community. They include such important international instruments in the field of arms limitation and disarmament as the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Convention on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, the Convention on the Prohibition of Biological and Toxin Weapons, the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty, etc.
>
> "I should like to assure the participants in the Conference that, in the post of President, Russia will do its utmost to ensure the success of the work of this forum."

I am sure that this message reflects the importance which Russia attaches to the work of the CD in the present situation.

(continued in English)

It gives me pleasure to now give the floor to the State Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Norway, Mrs. Siri Bjerke.

Mrs. BJERKE (Norway): May I first congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament and assure you of the support of the Norwegian Government? I also take this opportunity to thank Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky for his contribution as Secretary-General to the work of this Conference.

This is the first time that I have the honour to address the CD since Norway became a full member of the Conference. Finally we are able to take part in the consultations and negotiations on global disarmament and non-proliferation issues within the CD as an equal partner. It remains our conviction that the same right should be granted to all countries that express the wish to join the Conference. The CD derives its legitimacy from the assumption that it is a universal and representative negotiating body. But it is neither global, nor fully representative, if countries that have a legitimate stake in the issues before us do not have the same opportunity to safeguard their interests as those who currently are members.

The end of the cold war has made possible major achievements in global non-proliferation and disarmament. We now have a unique opportunity to build on the achievements made by developing a new European security architecture. An increased role for OSCE, the development of a new NATO and a special relationship between NATO and Russia are contributions to greater security for all States and will thereby further the disarmament process.

The Conference on Disarmament has reason to be proud of its contributions to these endeavours. The Chemical Weapons Convention of 1992, negotiated in these chambers, is finally in the process of entering into force. We hope that the present efforts to ensure ratification by the United States and the Russian Federation will be successful. Their participation in the global treaty-based regime to remove chemical weapons from the face of the Earth is crucial.

The CTBT, negotiated by many of you sitting around this table, is an equally important milestone in the annals of global disarmament. After the resumed session of the first CTBTO PrepCom here in Geneva, the process towards establishing a CTBT organization is now finally on its way. Norway will support the work by the Provisional Technical Secretariat to build up an effective and credible verification system within the necessary time-frame.

But substantive steps to curb the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction have also been taken outside these chambers. The successful NPT Extension and Review Conference in 1995 was a particularly important event in the efforts to curb the threat of one of the most deadly dangers to human existence - nuclear weapons. The "Principles and objectives" document from

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the 1995 NPT Conference sets out a concrete agenda for the follow-up process. My Government will take an active part in the PrepCom process to strengthen the non-proliferation regime.

Tomorrow the sixth session of the Ad Hoc Group to strengthen the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention will end. This process is now slowly moving in the right direction. During the next session in July, it should be possible to have more comprehensive and focused deliberations. Our aim should be to present a proposal for a verification protocol in 1998.

Regional and unilateral steps have also been important to reduce the nuclear threat. In Europe, Latin America, Africa and Asia, agreements have been reached to lower the levels of armaments or to ban the development of nuclear weapons altogether. But regional conflicts have also shown the lethal impact of modern conventional weapons on civilians and refugees. As long as innocent civilians continue to die or to be maimed by arms, long after the conflicts are ended, our global disarmament agenda remains unfinished.

The question faced by the international disarmament community, therefore, is not whether there are more tasks to be undertaken in our efforts towards more stable and predictable human security. The question is which issues should be negotiated first, and how negotiations can best be structured to reach relevant and realistic objectives. The Conference on Disarmament will continue to be one key instrument to negotiate global agreements on disarmament issues, but only if it can agree on relevant objectives. If progress in the CD is blocked by the fact that States have different security interests or objectives, then negotiations will be taken elsewhere. The credibility of the CD depends on its ability to deliver concrete agreements. This credibility is damaged if the CD is used as a vehicle to block achievable progress, by making negotiations on one issue hostage to simultaneous movement on others.

Nuclear issues should and will continue to be an important topic on the global multilateral disarmament agenda. In this context, nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation should not be viewed as separate processes. For non-proliferation efforts to succeed, further concrete progress must be demonstrated towards reducing the political and strategic significance of nuclear weapons in international politics.

A global ban on nuclear weapons must be the ultimate objective. The nuclear-weapons States have an obligation - enshrined in the NPT - to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in international politics. This obligation is one step in a process aiming at a legal codification of systematic and progressive efforts to reduce and eliminate those weapons.

The nuclear-weapons States must live up to this responsibility. We have consistently urged them to fully implement existing arms control and disarmament agreements. Furthermore, an early start of negotiations on reductions of strategic arsenals beyond those prescribed by START II, involving, as appropriate, also the other nuclear-weapons States, will not only contribute to a militarily safer world, but also be conducive to a more constructive and dynamic international climate. Importance should also be attached to further reductions in tactical nuclear weapons, and to their destruction. We know that thousands of tactical nuclear weapons have been withdrawn and put into storage. These weapons must be destroyed, and not merely stored. It is important to ensure that this part of the disarmament process is also continued, as proposed in earlier unilateral declarations.

The particular responsibility of nuclear-weapon States for nuclear disarmament should not be diluted. This is why it is difficult both in political and practical terms to transfer the responsibility for negotiations on nuclear disarmament from the nuclear-weapons States to multilateral forums. We are prepared to take part in discussions on nuclear disarmament issues in the CD. But to us, it is essential that the primary responsibility of the nuclear-weapon States is not to be diverted through such a process.

Several ideas have been launched to suggest how we could proceed on a broad scale in our efforts to address the nuclear issues. Some constructive ideas have been put forward in the report of the Canberra Commission. In our own approach to the wider problems related to nuclear activities, we have two basic assumptions. Firstly, it is increasingly evident that the potential risks of proliferation are inherent in both military and civilian nuclear activities. Secondly, the international disarmament agenda should also encompass the so-called "management of disarmament". The "management of disarmament" concerns the problems relating to the implementation of nuclear and chemical disarmament processes in particular, including the secure and environmentally safe handling of material from weapons scheduled for destruction. As a response to the serious challenges posed by these activities, the Norwegian Government has drawn up a plan of action on nuclear activities and chemical weapons in areas adjacent to our northern borders. One priority area of this plan is the management, storage and disposal of spent nuclear fuel and radioactive waste. Our goal is, in cooperation with other interested States, to achieve safe, cost-effective operations under an independent control and inspection mechanism, and in keeping with internationally accepted principles and guidelines.

Negotiations on an agreement prohibiting the production of fissile material for weapons purposes should be the next major item on the agenda of the CD. After the conclusion of the CTBT this would be in accordance with the "Principles and objectives" agreed at the NPT Review Conference in 1995. A cut-off agreement is an important means of reducing the availability of fissile material. The inclusion of measures to monitor enrichment and reprocessing facilities would strengthen a "cut-off" treaty. Such monitoring could be applied without undue interference with remaining military stockpiles.

We should work towards greater openness regarding the stocks of fissile material held by nuclear Powers. As a first step, the nuclear Powers should, on a voluntary basis, provide detailed information on their stocks of plutonium and highly enriched uranium. A second step could be to ensure cooperative measures to clarify and confirm those declarations. As a third step, the nuclear Powers could permit international inspection of their stocks, with the aim of ensuring that the inventory in storage can be taken out only for non-weapons purposes. As a fourth step, agreed monitored net reductions from these stockpiles could be introduced. Finally, as a last step in this context, consistent and stringent international standards of accounting and security for fissile materials might be established. Greater transparency is an essential confidence-building measure. Done in parallel, this would also facilitate cut-off negotiations.

The plague caused by widespread and indiscriminate use of anti-personnel landmines (APLs) is among the most urgent humanitarian issues facing us today. The military utility of APLs is far exceeded by their cost in human and socio-economic terms in affected countries, of which most are in the third world. Every single day, APLs cause tragedies among innocent civilians. Uncleared mines and minefields prevent much-needed socio-economic development in many societies long after hostilities have ended.

Norway has been heavily engaged in mine-clearing activities in different conflict areas and, in particular, in Africa, Asia and now Europe. Mine-clearing will continue to be a priority in many post-conflict situations. We do see the need for expanding existing mine-clearing capacity, and certainly for improving mine-clearing technology. But there will always be technical, financial and other factors constraining the number of mines to be cleared every day. Today the world is losing this battle; new deployments of APLs by far outstrip present mine-clearing capabilities. For many Governments, including the Norwegian, it is increasingly difficult to justify the fact that our efforts are directed mostly towards remedial measures, after the damage is done. As always, preventive action is much more effective, and certainly much cheaper, both in terms of money and - more importantly - in terms of human suffering.

My Government has reached the conclusion that a total ban on production, transfer and use of APLs would be the only way to stop this plague. That is why we introduced a national moratorium on the production, stockpiling, transfer and use of APLs in 1995. That is why we removed and destroyed all APLs in Norwegian military stockpiles last year. Our position on APLs was reached after careful assessment of our national and allied defence needs and the humanitarian costs involved. We do know that there are military implications and costs of the renunciation of APLs. But we have found no effective, acceptable alternative to a ban on all APLs as quickly as possible.

Immediate measures to ban APLs are called for. That is why Norway welcomed the initiation of the Ottawa Process. This is a channel for like-minded countries to speedily conclude an international agreement on a total ban on APLs. This is the instrument by which we can respond to international momentum to accelerate the process towards a total ban. This growing momentum includes a steadily increasing number of Governments, parliamentarians and a strong public opinion. It is supported by humanitarian agencies and by countries affected by the APL plague. We have to exploit this momentum. We are correspondingly sceptical of any efforts that might serve to have it derailed or delayed. An agreement in the CD seems to be blocked by the fact that many members cannot - for the time being - accept a total ban.

The Ottawa Process is not universal, but is open to any country sharing the goal of an international agreement on a total ban on APLs by December this year. The lack of universality, which seems elusive even in other forums, is not an excuse for not moving ahead. A successful conclusion of the Ottawa Process would establish a new international norm prohibiting the use of APLs. Once this norm is established, we will work to make it universal.

We would favour a text which is short and simple. It should clearly and unequivocally prescribe a comprehensive ban where the key objective is to prohibit the use of APLs. A "step-by-step" or "phased" approach which does not address this fundamental issue would not respond to the humanitarian concerns that we have.

We do not see that a legally binding ban on APLs needs traditional verification instruments as contained in disarmament agreements. We agree with the widespread view that complete verifiability is neither feasible, nor necessary, nor desirable. It is difficult to conceptualize efficient verification measures, but at the same time, it is very unlikely that it will be possible to hide the actual use of APLs.

An APL ban and mine-clearing are two sides of the same coin. Our endeavours to clear mine-affected areas should be enhanced. A clear commitment to halt deployment of APLs may in turn facilitate commitments to undertake mine-clearing.

The APL issue demands immediate action and we will continue to actively support and take part in the Ottawa Process. We look forward to the meeting in Brussels in June which will be the first session where a concrete treaty text is to be negotiated. Norway has offered to host a follow-up meeting in Oslo to facilitate the conclusion and signing of a convention on a total ban in Ottawa in December.

Within the broader global disarmament agenda, there continue to be important areas where the CD can make its contributions. We believe that there is merit in maintaining a forum like the Conference on Disarmament. Therefore, we must do our utmost to provide conditions which can facilitate constructive and concrete work.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the State Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Norway for her statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Italy, Ambassador Vattani.

Mr. VATTANI (Italy): First of all, Mr. President, I wish to thank you for the kind words you addressed to me. I am delighted to see you in the Chair of this distinguished assembly, as the representative of a country with which Italy has maintained, through centuries, deep relations of cooperation and cultural exchanges of which I, myself, had the privilege, in a previous professional experience, to be a witness and a promoter. Your well-known professional qualities and skills at the diplomatic service of a great nation which has always played, and will play, a decisive role in the international community are a reassuring factor and give us hope to overcome the difficulties hindering, at present, further achievements in this forum. I am persuaded that your talent, insight and qualities of mediation will bring positive results and, to this end, I wish you the best success.

Since this is the last time I take the floor in this distinguished assembly, I want to express, also on behalf of my Government, my warmest wishes for the progress of the activity of an organization which, particularly in the last years, has confirmed, with concrete and undeniable success, its competence as the only world forum for multilateral negotiations on disarmament. My three years' experience here will remain in my memory as a fundamental stage of research and study of the essential components of international negotiations and of their evolution, following trends and criteria always new and in continuous development. In no other situation the opportunity of perceiving the pulse of global political balances is given in such clear terms, even beyond the immediate objective of the negotiations. That is why the essence of the problems involved is bound to spill over to larger fields of interest, only apparently extraneous, and certainly influential.

I often had the impression to have chosen here something like a monastic way of life whose timetable was divided between early-morning working breakfasts, confabulations at the oratory tables, communal refectories (which made me think, sometimes, of the epicurean habits of the convents in the Renaissance times), lengthy debates, evening meditations on the most pressing concerns and spiritual exercises to keep alive an almost ascetic tolerance. A climate, anyway, of ever ongoing reflection and intellectual exercise which has kept at least my brain alert in spite of the workload, where perseverance, patience and conciliatory will were often put to the test.

Having arrived in Geneva at the time when, after a decade of efforts, the first significant agreement, following the end of the cold war, to ban chemical weapons, had been concluded, I had the opportunity, together with you all, to work on the CTBT negotiations. Such negotiations, successfully concluded, constitute a decisive event to meet the objective of a progressive containment and reduction of the nuclear threat. But looking at the immediate perspectives of the activity in this forum and notwithstanding the present difficulties for the launch of the numerous initiatives on hold, as additional potential factors for significant political successes and reaffirmation of the tasks of this Conference, I wish to recall the recent appeal of my Minister for Foreign Affairs, Lamberto Dini, in this forum. He called on us to overcome divisions and obstacles, in order to satisfy the expectations of the international community, which is looking at us with great attention, and to try and achieve those results to which our moral and civil duties bind us.

Moreover, I wish to express my regret at not having witnessed the further expansion in the membership of this Conference with the admission, in particular, of my partners of the European Union who, like the Republic of Ireland, have always devoted great commitment to the cause of peace and disarmament. To them, I renew the wish to see their legitimate aspirations finally realized, as my Government has repeatedly advocated.

Leaving this room, I will bring with me more than the dark representations of human fate and destiny, painted in such daunting frescoes of a Catalan mind (frescoes that I watched at leisure from the perspective of the four angles of this table). I will bring along also more precious remembrances: the recollection of the friendship and warm human feelings I have perceived from many partners in our daily efforts, some of whom have left in the history of this institution the mark of their strong personality. I wish to recall those who have recently left us to undertake new challenging tasks, in particular the former representative of France, Ambassador Errera, the Ambassador of Pakistan, Kamal, and the dynamic Ambassador of Germany, Hoffmann. I would also like to convey the expression of my deep esteem to Ambassador Ledogar, who, like me, is on the point of taking leave of this Conference and who, since a long time, is the dean of the diplomatic community on disarmament affairs. I do hope in my next post of assignment to have the opportunity to meet again the friends of the Conference on Disarmament, not only for the great pleasure of getting together again but also to keep alive my interest for the evolving activity of this forum which, after all, remains the best club in town.

We are on the eve of celebrating the Easter festivities, symbol of peace and reconciliation throughout the world (peace and reconciliation toward which His Holiness the Pope, John Paul II, invited us on the occasion of the World Day of Peace), and I want to address my best wishes to you all, to my dear friend Ambassador Petrovsky, to his deputy, Mr. Bensmail, and to all the members of the secretariat who, with their generous assistance, have done so much to facilitate the implementation of my commitment on behalf of my country, so devoted to the cause of a more safe, stable and prosperous world.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Italy for his statement and for the kind words addressed to me. I should like to give the floor to the representative of Switzerland, Ambassador Hofer.

Mr. HOFER (Switzerland) (translated from French): Mr. President, allow me first of all to congratulate you on taking up the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. The Swiss delegation feels particular satisfaction at seeing you guide our deliberations. It bears in mind the important role that you yourself and the State you represent so well are playing in our Conference. I cannot conceal from you the great hopes that we place in your presidency. We earnestly hope that it can lead to a concrete programme of work. I would also like to pay tribute to your predecessor, Mr. Pavel Grecu, chargé d'affaires of the Romanian Mission, who, thanks to his exemplary personal devotion, moved us forward by further clarifying our respective positions.

While today I will address several problems which have to do with the agenda adopted on 14 February last, I wish to confirm above all - and I reiterate here the profound conviction of Switzerland - that the Conference is faced with a priority task which is that of launching, without delay and without preconditions, negotiations on a multilateral treaty to ban the production of fissile material for military purposes. While emphasizing this priority, I think it would be useful to mention two other subjects here which reflect Switzerland's concerns.

The "Convention on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons" will come into force on 29 April next, that is, during the inter-sessional period of this Conference. Switzerland impatiently awaits the implementation of this Convention, which is the fruit of long years of negotiations in our institution. During these negotiations the United States of America and the Russian Federation played a crucial role, bearing in mind the enormous arsenals of chemical weapons in their possession, stockpiles whose destruction is due to be completed at the latest 10 years after the entry into force of this Convention. In this respect Switzerland welcomed the conclusion in 1990 of a bilateral agreement between these two countries on the joint verification of the destruction of their chemical weapons.

Switzerland is contributing actively to the implementation of this Convention, which it ratified two years ago. Our contribution takes the form, inter alia, of the organization of training courses for international inspectors of the future Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, OPCW/OIAC. Supported jointly by the Swiss Government and my country's private chemical industry, this course provides for training in the inspection of civilian facilities, as laid down in the Convention. In all, 76 candidate inspectors will follow the programme. The first contingent, numbering 38 participants from 30 States, began its work on 4 March last. This work will be concluded on 14 April, that is, two weeks before the entry into force of the Convention.

Following the sudden withdrawal of the United States from the OPCW/OIAC Preparatory Commission inspector training programme, Switzerland agreed to the request made by that body's Provisional Technical Secretariat to train a higher number of inspectors this month in Spiez, in the field of chemical production technology. The Swiss instructors in charge of this course were impressed by the quality, professional experience and devotion of these candidate inspectors, who have shown a remarkable spirit of teamwork. Beyond any doubt they will be able to discharge with success and professionalism the difficult task of inspector in the future international organization. The inspectors will be deployed, inter alia, in the verification of chemical weapons facilities. In this respect the candidates expressed their alarm about the fact that the two main possessors of chemical weapons production facilities have not yet ratified the Convention.

Switzerland too is concerned about the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention without the participation of the United States of America and the Russian Federation. This development brings with it not only the risk of weakening the present efforts being made in non-proliferation and multilateral disarmament, but also sends out a highly ambiguous signal to those States which have not yet finally renounced the use of chemical weapons. In this area the United States of America and the Russian Federation bear a special responsibility towards the international community. The bilateral meeting beginning today in Helsinki at presidential level might provide an opportunity to speed up the process of ratification and the implementation of the bilateral agreement we have already mentioned.

Today I am in a position to inform the Conference on Disarmament that Switzerland has the honour to convey invitations to an international seminar of experts on ballistics and its traumatic effects to all the delegations to the Conference as well as the States parties to the "Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects".

In this regard it is appropriate to indicate the framework into which this seminar falls. As you are aware, the most important conventions at present in force concerning small arms are as follows: the St. Petersburg Declaration of 1868; the Hague Declaration concerning the Prohibition of Using Bullets Which Expand or Flatten Easily in the Human Body dated 1899; the 1907 Hague Convention respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land; and the 1977 first Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 1949 relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts.

We note a gap between the field of application of these international instruments and the opportunities provided by technical progress in the development of a type of munitions which formally comply with them. At this very moment the use of certain munitions violates the aim and the spirit of these conventions, to say the very least, in our opinion. We should consequently ponder how this situation might be remedied. Like the International Committee of the Red Cross, which recalled the importance of drawing up a new protocol on munitions and small arms at the time of the Final Declaration of the Review Conference on the "Inhumane Weapons" Convention, Switzerland attaches particular importance to this problem. Encouraged by other States, it has decided to organize an international seminar intended to deal in detail with questions connected with the traumatic effects of ballistics. On this subject the experts will be enabled to identify the practical effects of such weapons, taking account of the humanitarian aspects, and to carry out technical tests which will make it possible to evaluate the reference methods. Their present legal status will also be examined.

For your information, the seminar will take place in Thun on 17 and 18 September next. It will enable specialists and scientists from all over the world to discuss this subject. It goes without saying that the States parties to the "Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons" as well as the States participating in the Conference on Disarmament are warmly invited to participate by sending two of their experts. For this purpose an invitation giving details about this event will be sent to the missions in the next few days. As of now my authorities are looking forward to welcoming you to Thun, near Bern.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Switzerland for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ambassador Nasseri.

Mr. NASSERI (Islamic Republic of Iran): I am not taking the floor today to make a general statement in a written form in the normal way, but to address the situation that the Conference is in. I think that has been the focus of our attention for the last few months and shall remain, and continue to remain, the focal point of our attention until we find a final solution and come to a conclusion on how we do our work this year.

For this year and this session, work started rather early. In fact, Ambassador Dembinski, the last President in 1996, started consultations as early as when the General Assembly was meeting in New York, and this was following the desire of this Conference to try to prepare itself for the work that it needs to take up for the year 1997. Through those discussions, ideas were raised. We have an initiative by the Secretary-General, Mr. Petrovsky, which was an interesting one. That was evolved into a proposal by our first President this year, Ambassador Sun, on the agenda for the Conference, which to us was a very interesting proposal, and we were hoping that we could have an agreement on the basis of that proposal. We had one month of discussion. We eventually came to the conclusion that perhaps the only, or at least the quickest, way to have an agreement on the agenda was to revert to the previous year's agenda and adopt it. It is not the best thing that we would have desired. We would have felt that the draft agenda presented by Ambassador Sun was more in tune with the priorities of the international community and reflected generally various resolutions that were adopted at the General Assembly. But in any case, we welcome the decision in order to ensure that the actual work can commence as early as possible. Since then, there has been a whole lot of consultation among the delegations to the Conference in various forms, and our ex-President, Mr. Grecu, even took it upon himself to go through a very lengthy process of discussing bilaterally with all delegations to see whether he can, through these consultations, this new form of consultations, come up with some suggestions and proposals as to how the work can be done.

Eventually, I believe we have now in the Conference a good collection of information as to where the positions stand. Yet we are not any closer at this point, it seems, to a final solution on the programme of work than we were two months ago. Of course, part of this is perhaps something that was anticipated. I recall that after the success of the CWC negotiations, we had to spend a few months to eventually be able to decide what would be the next step for the CD, and what would be taken up for negotiations. Therefore, it is unrealistic to assume that we should have been able to make a very quick decision right at the outset of this year's session. Yet the situation seems to be a bit different than at the time when we started CTBT negotiations. We are moving towards a situation of deep recession, hoping that something eventually will come up. But I think there is a risk that, in a sense, we are perhaps moving towards a deepening of the stalemate that exists at this juncture.

Now we are fortunate, Sir, that a person of your calibre, your qualities, your experience is taking charge of this Conference, and more than congratulating you for the assumption of the presidency, I sincerely wish to congratulate ourselves for having you in the Chair. I am certain that you are thinking, and thinking hard, and exploring ways to move forward. At least personally, I know how irritated you are about the continuation of this current state of affairs.

The approach that has been taken up so far apparently has been that there are some difficult areas and issues which we have to first resolve, and then other items on the agenda will simply fall in place. We are beginning to think that perhaps we are not taking the best and the most appropriate approach at this juncture, continuing to hope that some delegations which have some strong national positions on certain issues, which we do respect and we should fully respect, would eventually be able to show some flexibility. But simply waiting for that time, that magical time, to happen may not be the best way that this Conference can hope to be able to engage in real and actual work.

There are areas where there seems to be, at least, no objection at this stage. So in our view, perhaps it is better to concentrate on those areas, get some work started, and at the same time continue our consultations in some regulated way in order to arrive at a conclusion on other more difficult issues. It is in this light that we are proposing today, formally, a programme of work, which I assume has just been distributed. I believe it is self-explanatory. The Conference, in our view, can move immediately to establish two ad hoc committees, one on NSA, where we already have a consensus mandate, which has been the basis the negotiations of the Ad Hoc Committee in the past and is simply the continuation of those negotiations, and the other on agenda item 7, Transparency in armaments.

The Conference of course cannot limit itself to the work of these two ad hoc committees. We therefore are proposing that a special coordinator be appointed to deal with issues under item 1 of the agenda and to report to us as to what would be the best arrangement to be followed by the Conference.

The same goes for item 6 of the agenda, where we also propose that a special coordinator be appointed. Of course, this is for the programme of work as far as the items on the agenda are concerned. Consultations have been going on about appointing special coordinators on the agenda and on the expansion of the membership, which has not been mentioned here.

We should at the same time recognize that we are more or less pressed by time. That is, we cannot, for instance, have special coordinators who would report to us at the end of this year, and then we leave and come back next year and be in the same position. Therefore, in our proposal, we have suggested that the Conference will receive an interim report by the end of May and a final report no later than mid-June 1997. And mid-June means a few days before the end of the second part of the session. And there our intention is, one way or the other, to really come to a conclusion on these other issues as much as possible by the end of the second part of the session, so that at least for the third part of the session we will know where we stand.

This is our proposal. We are making this proposal, and I say it in the most sincere way, with no political agenda. We, as Iran, have been able to go along with any proposal, any proposal on the programme of work, as long as the Conference can engage itself to do some work, and not sit idle and discuss, in ways that are becoming rather intolerable, I should say, the issue of the agenda and the programme of work. We would have accepted the establishment of an ad hoc committee on any of the items on the agenda. So, we are flexible, and I believe a large number of delegations here are flexible, and they simply wish to see that the Conference engages in some substantive work as soon as possible, and I think that moment has come. "As soon as possible" is not an unlimited time. That time has already arrived, and it is in that light that we are making this proposal. We hope that this does not harm any delegation's position. We think it does not, and that has been the spirit behind this. We hope that we can have an agreement on this as soon as possible. In fact, we are proposing that a decision be taken on this proposal at our next plenary.

Having said that, I have to say a few words with a very warm heart about Ambassador Vattani. I shall simply and very briefly say that this Conference is going to miss a very knowledgeable expert, a very tactful diplomat and a charming, charming personality, and for me, I can say, a very, very dear friend. I wish him the best of success both in his professional life and also in his personal life, and I hope that he will invite us where he is going to visit him because we, as the most favourite club in town, like usually to be invited to places we go, rather than going on our own. Ciao, Alessandro.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Russian): I thank the distinguished representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran for his statement, for the kind words addressed to the Chair, and also for his proposal. And now I would like to give the floor to the distinguished representative of the United States of America, Ambassador Ledogar.

Mr. LEDOGAR (United States of America): I take the floor today for the last time. It is both a happy and ironic coincidence that I do so under your Presidency, Ambassador Berdennikov, given that the United States and Russia have for so many years been at the heart of what goes on in this chamber. Thus it seems to mouth the usual platitudes about how pleased I am to see you in the Chair, and how we should celebrate the progression of the alphabet, would somehow trivialize this curious circumstance.

As you pointed out, I have served in Geneva for more than seven years, and I have been fortunate enough to participate in some of the CD's most worthwhile and enduring enterprises. The Chemical Weapons Convention and the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty are monuments to what this body can achieve when its members wish to do so. The successful conclusion of these treaties in effect ratifies the worth of the multilateral negotiating process, even if universal ratification of the treaties themselves may be problematic. And, we must remember, this process is all we have going for us in the global effort to reduce the level of armaments in the world and to stabilize their effect.

My sense of pride in these accomplishments is tempered, however, by growing frustration with what I can only describe as a doomed effort to force the nuclear Powers to negotiate now in this forum the elements of a disarmament process that they are conducting elsewhere. The implacable hefters of this linkage crowbar have blocked all work in this body for the foreseeable future, even work which is in the best interests of this body's members. Theirs is a self-defeating effort - one which works to the disadvantage of the entire world community. The CD is supposed to be strictly a negotiating body, but it is not immune to the laws of politics. And politics, as we all know, is the art of the possible. I can only hope, as I take leave of you, that a sense of realism will once again assert itself in the CD, and that the members will not allow it to be paralysed by unrealistic and impolitic demands. The real disarmament needs of the world community are simply too overwhelming and urgent. The CD should do what it can do, and help where it can help. It should seek to achieve again the importance that was its due in the past. It should not try to insist on the undoable.

Nuclear disarmament is happening now. It will happen more and even faster in the future. That the CD cannot for the foreseeable future have the governing role in the process in no way detracts from the importance of the CD's mission to seek multilateral arms control agreements of use to the entire world, nor from its stature as the world's only global arms control negotiating body.

My seven-plus years here have been graced by close association with some of the world's sharpest and most competent diplomats. I have not agreed with some of them; in fact, at one time or another my instructions have caused me to be at odds with many of you. My style is not agreeable to many, either - a fact I recognize with an ambivalent mixture of pride and regret. I called the shots as I saw them, and I took a few hits in the process. But I can honestly say that this association, from my point of view, has never been anything less than professional and respectful, and that together we have achieved much of lasting value.

It remains only for me to thank you - my colleagues and your staffs - for the seriousness and the professionalism with which you have treated me and my delegation over the years. I also thank the interpreters, other providers of conference services and all the members of the international secretariat for their support and attention to the needs of the Conference on Disarmament in general, and of my delegation in particular. The sense of dedication to the task of multilateral disarmament which has been entrusted to the CD by the international community is manifest in the professionalism of all who work with or in this body. It speaks well for the CD, and it gives me hope that the Conference will endure and prosper.

Thank you also for your kind words addressed to me and my family, and a special thanks and mutual farewell to my friend, Alessandro Vattani of Italy.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Russian): I thank the distinguished representative of the United States for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. That concludes my list of speakers for today. Does any delegation wish to take the floor at this stage? I see none.

Distinguished delegates, you have heard the proposal officially introduced by the distinguished representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran, who proposed inter alia that a decision should be taken on his proposal at the next plenary meeting. As usual, Presidential consultations will be held next Thursday with the coordinators of the groups in our Conference, and I hope that during those consultations I will be informed of the views of the groups on the proposal made by the distinguished representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The next plenary meeting of the Conference, and the last of this part of the session, will be held next Thursday, 27 March at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 11.20 a.m.

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.762
27 March 1997

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE SEVEN HUNDRED AND SIXTY-SECOND PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 27 March 1997, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Berdennikov (Russian Federation)

THE PRESIDENT: I declare open the 762nd plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament and the last during the first part of the 1997 session.

I have on my list of speakers for today the representatives of Germany, Finland and Chile. Once we have exhausted the list of speakers for today, I intend to put for the decision of the Conference the requests of Ecuador and the United Arab Emirates to participate in our work as observers during the current session. With your concurrence, I shall put these requests for decision without first going into an informal meeting.

I now give the floor to the representative of Germany, Mr. Achenbach.

Mr. ACHENBACH (Germany): Let me first congratulate you, Sir, on the assumption of the presidency of this Conference. I would like to assure you that the German delegation fully shares the view of the importance of the work that has been done in the past and that can and should be done in the future by this Conference, as expressed in the encouraging message by your Foreign Minister to the Conference. The German delegation will do its utmost to support you in the execution of your demanding office at this difficult time. At the same time, I would like to express thanks and recognition to your predecessor, Mr. Pavel Grecu, for his untiring efforts to move towards consensus on the work programme of this Conference. I am convinced that the results of these efforts, although not immediately apparent, will be more clearly seen in the future and will provide a solid foundation for you to build on further.

In the view of the German Government, it is high time that the Conference, after these lengthy and in-depth consultations, should arrive at consensus on the work programme. Germany has already stated its priorities for this work programme: the immediate start of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off and on an effective, legally binding international agreement to ban anti-personnel mines. The vast majority of delegations are indeed willing to treat these items. I appeal to all delegations to free the way for concrete negotiations on these topics immediately upon the resumption of the Conference session in May. Germany is open-minded as to the wishes expressed by other delegations. In a spirit of compromise and cooperation on all sides, it should be possible to reach consensus soon.

At the beginning of this Conference session, Germany has already stressed the high priority it attaches to the early conclusion of an effective and legally binding international agreement to ban anti-personnel mines. It is an important objective of German foreign policy to eradicate once and for all, and as early as possible, this cruel and inhumane weapon. Germany has decided to work towards this objective by all effective means and in any appropriate forums.

It is in this spirit that I want to inform this Conference that on 24 and 25 April 1997 an international meeting of experts will be held in Bonn on the possible verification of a comprehensive international treaty banning anti-personnel mines. The meeting follows up on the international efforts to achieve a comprehensive solution to the worldwide landmine problem that is satisfactory to all concerned. It is intended to help bring about as soon as possible a comprehensive international treaty banning anti-personnel mines. The Federal Republic of Germany is convinced that immediate and determined action is crucial to ensure the earliest possible success of ongoing worldwide activities to achieve a comprehensive ban on anti-personnel mines.

The Federal Republic of Germany welcomes the progress made at the international meeting of experts held in Vienna from 12 to 14 February 1997 in drafting the text of a future treaty banning anti-personnel mines. At the same time, the discussions revealed that the issue of verification - an essential aspect of any effective ban on anti-personnel mines - needs further detailed attention.

The Federal Government therefore proposes that this should be the focus of a two-day meeting of experts to be held in Bonn. The meeting will deal solely with specific technical and practical problems in this area and consider possible elements which could serve as the basis of a verification regime. The Government of the Federal Republic of Germany will forward the results of these discussions to the participating States as well as to the international forums concerned with the mines problem.

A discussion of other aspects of the proposed treaty or of procedural matters - for instance, the question of the negotiating forum - is not envisaged. Nor will the meeting take any decisions on substantive issues.

The meeting of experts is open to all countries interested in an exchange of views on this question. Invitations have been extended bilaterally through diplomatic channels. First reactions have been very encouraging. We therefore look forward to a productive meeting with widespread participation that will bring us one step forward to the common goal shared by so many countries.

THE PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Germany for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Finland, Ambassador Reimaa.

Mr. REIMAA (Finland): Mr. President, we would like to join the previous speaker in congratulating you in your new tasks and assure you of the full cooperation of the Finnish delegation.

I have the honour to take the floor to present to you, and to this Conference, the official proposal by Finland, Chile and Poland to appoint a special coordinator on anti-personnel landmines under agenda item 6.

The fact that this proposal is made by three countries representing three different geographical groups in the CD underlines the importance that many countries from all groups attach to the question of anti-personnel landmines here in the CD. During this part of the session we have used a lot of time to discuss this question. We know there still are different views and concerns regarding this issue. It is our view that the appointment of a special coordinator would be the best way to start serious work to tackle and solve these questions, and so to find the most appropriate way to deal with anti-personnel landmines in the CD.

The purpose of our proposal is only to try to speed up the process of consultations and negotiations, and as the proposal says, we would expect that the special coordinator should present a report on the consultations already before the end of May 1997.

Finally, we would hope that you, as our President, could take this proposal as a neutral contribution to your activities during the recess.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Russian): I thank the distinguished representative of Finland for his statement and for his kind words. As I pointed out, the list of speakers still contains the name of the Ambassador of Chile, but unfortunately so far he is not here, so I would be prepared now to ask whether anyone else wishes to take the floor now, and then we hope that we will succeed in hearing the statement by the distinguished representative of Chile. I call on the distinguished representative of Canada, Ambassador Moher.

Mr. MOHER (Canada): We were going to speak at the end of the formal statements this morning, but given your invitation, Sir, I would like just to mention to delegations, all of whom are aware, that Canada continues to give priority to the Ottawa Process for dealing with a global ban on the use of anti-personnel landmines. The Canadian Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Mr. Lloyd Axworthy, is convening today, in Ottawa, the diplomatic corps for the purpose of speaking to them on that matter, and I have been requested to circulate to all delegations here the speaking notes that he will be using on that occasion, as well as a one-page Ottawa Process "road map". As I mentioned, this is for the information of this group. It is part of our efforts to try to maintain transparency in this regard, and with your permission we will ask the secretariat to circulate that.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Russian): I thank the distinguished representative of Canada for his statement, and now I am especially pleased to call on Ambassador Berguño, the representative of Chile.

Mr. BERGUÑO (Chile) (translated from Spanish): Mr. President, as I congratulate you and offer you the cooperation of my delegation, I have to apologize for being late in beginning this cooperation. My intention at this point is to speak very briefly on two aspects that are at the centre of our concerns, not only today but since the beginning of this session of the Conference on Disarmament, in which a climate of uncertainty prevails and it does not appear that there can be an easy outcome despite the steadfast efforts made by your predecessors to give impetus to our programme of work. Your experience, your skill, the way in which you highlight and bring clarity and understanding to national positions encourage us to hope that we shall find a way to tackle this work programme.

The proposal that the delegation of Finland has put before us with regard to the terms of reference, the criteria whereby a special coordinator might be appointed to deal with the question of anti-personnel landmines, is of great importance for the delegation of Chile. On this subject, we believe that if the coordinator is appointed under agenda item 6, it would be preferable to spell out, as in the proposal which was presented by Finland which we support, to spell out what it is for, but not to speak only of item 6. Nevertheless, whatever the wording, the question cannot be avoided. Either the Conference on Disarmament reaches the conclusion that it cannot address this issue and that it is not in a position to do so, and then clearly other processes will deal with the aspects which aim at the possible but final prohibition of these weapons which are cruel, inhuman, but which in some aspects are similar to weapons of mass destruction, because of the magnitude of the impact they have had against human life. If this happens, the problem is that this issue will be considered from the point of view of disarmament in another forum, and I think that this undoubtedly important precedent, which would then become inevitable, would not be a good precedent for the Conference on Disarmament. It is true that in the history of the relationship between international humanitarian law and disarmament law there are points of agreement and aspects where, while one element may prevail, the other element has been present since the time of the Hague rules in the last century, since the first manifestation of international humanitarian law. It also contains a first manifestation of disarmament, because it relates to the sizes of certain projectiles; there are the two facets, the strategic facet and the humanitarian facet. In so far as one of them, so to speak, takes precedence, light is certainly shed on the process, but in the view of the delegation of Chile there is no doubt that in the matter of anti-personnel landmines there is a considerable disarmament dimension and that for these aspects the most appropriate forum is the multilateral forum.

This leads me to the second part of my statement, which concerns the proposal which the delegation of Iran has placed before us and to which you, Sir, and the other delegations that are members of the Conference will be giving the consideration it deserves inasmuch as it is not only an effort of imagination but also a coherent, balanced and restrained arrangement. It is a proposal which does not satisfy many delegations. It does not satisfy my delegation. For example, Chile would have preferred, like other countries, to have in addition a reference to the question of outer space, which is of importance to us, but clearly what is being presented here is a very simple and very direct question, and that is, if the Conference on Disarmament wishes to carry out a work programme, wishes to perform a useful function, and if the corresponding answer is yes, it does want to, it is ready to discharge its responsibilities, it is ready to take up its tasks in a mature manner and in a sensible manner, we must give not just consideration but support to this proposal. This proposal includes an essential element from the perspective of the non-nuclear States, which is the question of negative assurances, and in the interests of balance it includes an aspect that has been upheld more by other countries but also enjoys a considerable measure of support, and that is transparency in armaments. This proposal realistically recognizes that the other aspects will have to be taken up by special coordinators in so far as success is not achieved in reaching the consensus that would have been desirable for the establishment, for each of these issues, of an ad hoc committee, an ad hoc committee in the case of nuclear disarmament which my delegation would certainly have desired. It seems to us that in this proposal, which we value and appreciate, there is more than a basis for negotiation, there is a basis for making progress, at least provisionally. If the Conference can begin to work on a programme structured on this basis and can continue the process of consultations, but in an already institutionalized form, in a form in which at least a positive signal has been given, an act of political will, a demonstration that the Conference wishes to continue to exist, working and performing a useful function, we should give this proposal more than consideration, we should give it support, and that is the position of my delegation.

I would conclude by saying just one thing. In earlier meetings I have said that for the developing non-nuclear countries in particular, it is more crucial than for others to keep this forum alive. But I think that this view is still a partial view, that what is really of importance is that there should exist for the international community, for the United Nations system, for the international disarmament system, a centre that can articulate and organize and is able not only to assimilate the experience of the past but to project it into the future in a programme of disarmament. That articulating centre, that negotiating forum, that multilateral consideration, can only derive from this Conference on Disarmament. If the instrument is abandoned, the process will certainly continue, and the process goes faster than the instrument, but the process will continue in a way that will not give all States the full range of guarantees of equal access to the negotiations, fuller participation in those negotiations and a universal outcome for each of the instruments negotiated. I think that is what will happen if we continue with the status quo in which we find ourselves at the present time.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Russian): I thank the distinguished Ambassador of Chile for his statement and his kind words.

(continued in English)

That concludes my list of speakers for today. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor at this stage?

As announced at the beginning of this plenary meeting, I should like to take up for decision the requests presented by Ecuador and the United Arab Emirates to participate, as observers, in accordance with the relevant rules of procedure of the Conference, in our work. These requests are contained in document CD/WP.486, which is before you. May I take it that the Conference agrees to these requests?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: Consultations are still under way on the proposal made by the Islamic Republic of Iran at our last plenary meeting on the programme of work, as contained in document CD/1450. These consultations indicate that more time is needed to allow delegations to receive instructions from their capitals on this proposal, and therefore I intend to keep this matter under review.

I give the floor to the distinguished Ambassador of Iran.

Mr. NASSERI (Islamic Republic of Iran): I apologize for interrupting you for a moment, Mr. President, but I simply wish to ask for some clarification. As you have rightly noted, we had proposed that our proposal, now reflected in CD/1450, be taken up for decision today. I, too, have been informed that various groups and all delegations have been studying and considering this proposal. I am thankful to all of them and, indeed, I hope that this proposal, with any changes that might be agreed upon, can be adopted soon, because the intention is simply to proceed, and to proceed as soon as possible. This is not really a proposal that would become a proposal like the others and take a very long time, another session or two, before it is taken up for a decision. Therefore, when you said that you would keep this under review, could you clarify that a bit further? For instance, how would you hold consultations, when, and by when do you suppose that you would be able to refer the matter back to the CD? I know that it is a very difficult question, but anything you can say on this that will shed some light on the procedure would be useful for the Conference.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Russian): I thank the distinguished representative of Iran for his clarifications and his question. The President is entirely in the hands of the members, and as soon as the members of the Conference are ready to take a decision on your proposal, I will be happy to put it to them. But that moment has not yet come, as was convincingly demonstrated by the consultations I had the pleasure of conducting yesterday with the coordinators of the regional groups. I will pursue my efforts to ensure that this matter is resolved as speedily as possible. The distinguished representative of Iran has the floor.

Mr. NASSERI (Islamic Republic of Iran): I should reiterate that I am fully appreciative of your efforts, Sir. If I may say so, perhaps one way to approach this would be to hold open-ended informal consultations on this proposal when we resume our session in May. I understand that it will be difficult to hold consultations on this proposal during the inter-sessional period because some members will be in New York, and others here. But I would assume that at the beginning of the second part of the session, it should be entirely possible to do this. In any case, it is difficult to gather the views of the delegations on the proposal in a haphazard way. I have heard some comments here and there, but even for us who have made the proposal, we still do not know what the views of various delegations are, and if there can be an opportunity in the form, as I suggested, of open-ended informal consultations, then that at least gives us an opportunity to evaluate how much of a chance this proposal has, because frankly, as the country that has made it, we would really like to see a decision taken soon. Whether it is approved, rejected, or amended and improved does not make much difference. Iran has now bound itself to a very compromised position through this. It does not reflect the Iranian position, and we cannot remain bound to this proposal for a very long time. So, for that purpose alone, if not for anything else - although it is also, I think, important for the sake of the CD to have a decision quickly on this - it is important that we know how the consultations would be pursued, and I hope that the Conference and you will agree to pursue the consultations at least as a first stage to holding such a meeting.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Russian): I thank the distinguished representative of Iran for his further clarification and the proposal he has made. Personally I fully share this approach and I would like to request the distinguished group coordinators to communicate their views to me on that proposal at the next Presidential consultations, which will take place on 14 May.

On that note I shall adjourn this meeting. The next meeting will take place on Thursday, 15 May 1997 at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 10.50 a.m.

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.763
15 May 1997

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE SEVEN HUNDRED AND SIXTY-THIRD PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 15 May 1997, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Berdennikov (Russian Federation)

The PRESIDENT (translated from Russian): I declare open the 763rd plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament, the first of the second part of our annual session.

At the outset, allow me to extend a warm welcome on behalf of the Conference and on my own behalf to our guest speakers today, Mr. John Holum, Director of the United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, and Mr. Kostyantyn Gryshchenko, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Their presence yet again among us today will no doubt provide us with the necessary impetus as we grapple with the programme of work of the Conference. I am sure that their statements will be followed with keen interest and attention. I am personally particularly pleased to welcome the distinguished Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, Mr. Gryshchenko, with whom I worked for years in the Arms Limitation and Disarmament Problems Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union. I would also like to extend a cordial welcome to the new representative of Italy to the CD, Ambassador Giuseppe Balboni Acqua, and to assure him of our cooperation and support in his new assignment.

I have on my list of speakers for today the representatives of the United States of America, Ukraine, Egypt, Japan, Hungary, Morocco and Canada.

(continued in English)

I now give the floor to the representative of the United States of America, Mr. John Holum, Director of the United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency.

Mr. HOLUM (United States of America): It is an honour again to present to this body the views of the United States, and to congratulate you, Sir, for ably discharging your duties as its President. Our delegation pledges its support in the weeks to come.

I want to discuss the progress and future of arms control, and the role of this Conference, which, I believe, will depend heavily on how it handles two key issues that are clearly ripe for its resolution. The first, a fissile material cut-off treaty, would take an important step toward a world in which the risks and roles of nuclear weapons are further diminished, and our ultimate aim, their elimination, is brought closer. The second seeks to free the world of anti-personnel landmines, for as President Clinton stressed again in his message to this body in January, our children "deserve to walk the Earth in safety".

The Conference on Disarmament has the capacity to succeed in both these vital negotiations. The evidence of that is manifest in its remarkable recent body of fruitful work. The Conference reported the Chemical Weapons Convention to the United Nations General Assembly in September 1992. It has now entered into force, with the United States, I'm more than happy to say, among its original parties.

(Mr. Holum, United States)

Last year this Conference generated the text of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty, extracting all the consensus that was available. The United Nations General Assembly was able to adopt it without change, thus completing a quest long and ardently pursued by some of the international community's greatest leaders.

These treaties define the Conference on Disarmament. This is the body where arms control negotiations, not merely discussions, are conducted. This is where the world's substantive expertise on arms control, not just its polemical vehemence, resides. This is where every perspective, every region, every alignment, every ideology, every interest is represented. And as a result, this is a place where treaties of true global standing are given life, treaties like the Non-Proliferation Treaty, now with 185 members; the Chemical Weapons Convention, with 165 signatories; the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty, already with 144 signatories, including 41 of the 44 countries needed for entry into force.

As President Clinton made clear in his message to you this January, the United States stands ready to help expand this body of achievement. But of course the Conference itself will decide whether it will solidify its tradition of success, or perhaps commence a slide toward the periphery of international affairs.

In short, this is a year of decision for the Conference on Disarmament.

Consider the practical benefits of success on a fissile material cut-off treaty. The objective of banning the production of fissile material for any nuclear explosive device is nearly as old as the nuclear age itself. The initiatives of such statesmen as Prime Minister Nehru in 1954 and Prime Minister Trudeau in 1978 confirm the historical breadth of support for a global treaty toward that end. Indeed, for many years it was championed by the Non-Aligned.

In 1993, President Clinton placed the United States squarely on that same side of the issue. Also in 1993, the United Nations adopted a consensus resolution calling for a global, verifiable treaty to cut off the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or any other nuclear explosive device.

But this body, having agreed two springs ago to a negotiating mandate, has found itself unable to proceed because a few delegations have chosen to block consensus even to initiate negotiations.

What, in practical terms, is at stake here? Two truths are dominant. First, fissile material is the modern chokepoint, the critical-path necessity, far scarcer than bomb know-how, in building or enhancing nuclear stockpiles. Without it arsenals can neither be established nor expanded. And second, new fissile material for weapons requires reprocessing or enrichment.

So the issue squarely before this body is whether these processes, in perpetuity, will be used only for reactor fuel, for peaceful research, for medical isotopes and other non-explosive purposes, and never again for nuclear weapons. The issue is whether we can safeguard newly produced material to guarantee that the stocks available for use in weapons will not and cannot grow.

We would codify in a global, binding, verifiable treaty, what has only lately become a practice of the nuclear-weapon States, one that is eminently reversible, one that is predicated on the relatively benign geopolitical security environment that thankfully prevails at this moment.

Keep in mind that this is a constraint specifically on the nuclear-weapon States. They will be subject to a universal upper bound on how much fissile material can ever be devoted to nuclear weapons. All their highly enriched uranium and plutonium removed from nuclear weapons and disposed of could never be replaced. All reprocessing or enrichment would be declared and subject to international verification, for nuclear-weapon States and other States alike.

Moreover, this manifestly is arms control as well as non-proliferation. It is hard to imagine how nuclear arms reductions can proceed much further without a dependable limit on the nuclear materials, without confidence that any clandestine production of fissile material will be detected.

And this step is achievable now. For the treaty should be simple and straightforward. It could be accomplished relatively quickly. And it could even make use of an existing international organization, appropriately adapted, for implementation.

So the negotiating mandate for the fissile material cut-off presents this body with a clear choice. We can continue to talk about nuclear disarmament in the abstract, or we can get on with it in practice. With every passing week that the Conference avoids this next achievable step so plainly before it, the world must wonder, on what basis would a few States have it declare an endpoint for nuclear disarmament years in the future, when it cannot even begin work on cutting off the spigot for more nuclear weapons today?

What we need is simple: a "yes" to prompt commencement of negotiations on the basis of the existing consensus mandate. By undertaking and completing this negotiation promptly, this body can make an immediate contribution to nuclear disarmament, and keep faith with the United Nations General Assembly and the 1995 NPT Review Conference, both of which assigned this work here.

There is another constituency with whom we must keep faith. They live far from the diplomatic corridors of Geneva or New York. But we must heed their pain.

In the hour or so we spend together here, a senseless and avoidable tragedy will likely strike three or four innocent human beings. Somewhere in this time, a farmer in Latin America, a child in Asia, a mother in Africa, will accidentally pull a trip wire, or press a firing pin that will detonate an anti-personnel landmine and end their lives, or blight them forever.

(Mr. Holum, United States)

Anti-personnel landmines, or APLs, have catastrophic consequences for civilian populations. They are categorized as conventional weapons, in contrast to weapons of mass destruction that can wipe out whole cities at a time. But anti-personnel landmines are wiping out the equivalent of whole cities, a few people at a time.

We have it in our power to help end this.

A year ago this week, President Clinton announced United States support for banning anti-personnel landmines. In our view the Conference on Disarmament should promptly agree to commence negotiations, and complete a global ban at the earliest possible time.

Strikingly, no government represented here is on record opposed to starting such work. So why is this body only negotiating about negotiations, when the world demands that we negotiate about mines?

Aside from the paralysing obstacle of linkage to other causes, which I will address later, four main objections are interposed to an anti-personnel landmine negotiation.

First, an APL treaty is alleged to be a humanitarian measure unfit for this body, which negotiates arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament agreements. But is not such a distinction almost entirely artificial? Disarmament measures almost invariably have humanitarian effects. For example, the Chemical Weapons Convention was propelled in considerable part by the recognition that poison gas is an especially cruel weapon that operates indiscriminately, against civilians as well as soldiers.

Moreover, the humanitarian aspects of the landmines issue are being addressed in other ways. Many countries, including the United States, are contributing to the dangerous work of removing leftover mines around the world. And last year's amendments to the Convention on Conventional Weapons did much to address the humanitarian problem of civilian casualties resulting from newly emplaced APLs. What is needed now is a bold disarmament step.

The second objection is that an APL ban may not accommodate the legitimate security concerns of some States. But the Conference on Disarmament is a body whose procedures ensure that every serious concern is seriously considered. If a concern is real and garners more than isolated support, it will likely find expression in the Conference's product.

The third bar to negotiations relates to the mandate itself. Any mandate, if unduly specific, would contain something unacceptable to somebody. A draft mandate should remain flexible as to its particulars, so long as the ultimate destination is clear. Various routes to a comprehensive APL ban might work. Negotiations evolve. We need not be immobilized today by uncertainty about how to handle every turn and bump that may appear in the road tomorrow.

The fourth objection is that APL negotiations here would be incompatible with the Ottawa Process. But simultaneous negotiations in this body and in Ottawa are complementary, not competitive. Each makes a valuable contribution. One is quick, involving willing countries; the other is broad and deep, involving every country represented here. They both pursue the same ultimate goal. Neither process need interfere with the other. Each can augment the other.

Complementary means that Geneva and Ottawa together can save more lives and limbs than either could save alone.

Of course, the Conference need not fear that it will be bound by any particular product or method of the Ottawa Process, for this body inevitably will develop its own text in its own way.

Those participating in the Ottawa Process do so with our good wishes. So long as this Conference bends to our common task, Ottawa's momentum and success should only inspire and heighten our own.

Both of these priorities - the fissile cut-off and the APL ban - are, of course, constrained by another obstacle: the proposition that the Conference on Disarmament should do nothing else until it starts negotiating the elimination of all nuclear weapons.

I detect an assumption on the part of some here, perhaps even an expectation, that eventually the United States will come around and agree to such negotiations, or at least preparations for them, if only so other important items can proceed. So I want to be very clear. The real obstacle to nuclear disarmament negotiations here is not the willingness of the parties, but the capacity of the forum. It will not work. It will set back disarmament. We cannot and should not agree to it. That is true today. It will be equally true next year, and five years in the future.

Does that mean nuclear disarmament is dead? On the contrary, it is striding ahead. START I implementation is under way. In Helsinki, Presidents Clinton and Yeltsin brought START II nearer fruition. And they set a vision for the next phase, after START II comes into force, with cumulative total reductions of 80 per cent from cold war peaks in START III, and the first agreed limits not only on delivery systems, but on the warheads themselves.

Clearly, the way to extend nuclear disarmament today is through the same painstaking step-by-step process that has produced such dramatic results in recent years. In contrast, bringing nuclear disarmament to this Conference unquestionably means halting all progress for the sake of a long argument over the ultimate destination, and when we must arrive there. Indeed, does anyone think any of our recent progress, including Helsinki, could pass muster here? Of course it would be blocked, because someone would pronounce it insufficient.

But the strategy of linkage is even more pernicious than that. For it aims not only to bring disarmament here, and thus stall it, but would specifically deny the basis for arms control progress elsewhere.

Real gains in arms control and disarmament depend not on leverage or altruism, but on what is possible at a given moment as a matter of security. Recall that article VI of the NPT specifically places nuclear disarmament in a larger disarmament context, imposing this broader obligation on all States parties. It thus embodies the essential truth that nuclear disarmament cannot occur on demand or in a vacuum, but must be approached in tandem with broader improvements in the international security environment.

The permanent Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty, the Chemical Weapons Convention, are all just such improvements. The enhanced nuclear safeguards under review right now in Vienna are another, and will contribute immensely more to disarmament than every resolution ever written, and every pronouncement ever made, about how the nuclear-weapon States ought to do more. And cumulatively, all such practical advances explain the progress at Helsinki, and why further steps thought impossible just three years ago are becoming possible now.

A cut-off in production of fissile material for weapons would be another step in precisely the same direction. So countries that refuse fissile material cut-off treaty negotiations here are not only blocking one specific goal; they are undermining the prospects for the very nuclear disarmament they profess so fervently to cherish. Indeed, such an embrace offers strangulation.

So who and what are harmed as paralysis settles in on this body? The future innocent victims of anti-personnel landmines is one answer, mainly, of course, in non-aligned countries. The cause of disarmament is harmed, as tangible steps here, fostering further progress elsewhere, are stymied. And I suggest that grave damage can be done to the Conference on Disarmament itself, as its credibility, standing and effectiveness are sapped by months of inaction, foreshadowing an empty future. What an irony that would be for those States who have waited years to join the Conference on Disarmament only to miss out on its glory and share in its decline, as the real business of arms control seeks out more promising venues.

Of course we can escape such dismal prospects. But not without significant change from where we are today; not without restoration of the practical, methodical, problem-solving, step-by-step methods that have enabled this body's finest hours and greatest achievements.

Without further delay, let us return to work. Let us negotiate both treaties that are now ready for action and thus build the intertwined twin legacies of a strong Conference on Disarmament and a safer world.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of the United States of America for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, Mr. Kostyantyn Gryshchenko.

Mr. GRYSHCHENKO (Ukraine): It gives me special pleasure to address the Conference on Disarmament at a time when the presidency of the CD is assumed by the Ambassador of the Russian Federation - a neighbouring country which, alongside with the United States of America, is destined to play a leading role in global disarmament efforts and I would like to wish Ambassador Berdennikov every success in guiding the work of the Conference.

Last year was significant in CD activities, primarily due to the completion of the negotiations on the CTBT. More than 40 years passed before the language of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty, elaborated at the Conference on Disarmament, was confirmed by signatures of more than 140 States. Out of the 44 signatures necessary for the CTBT to enter into force, only three are still missing. In this context, however, the word "only" is not quite appropriate, since these are the signatures of the States with developed nuclear infrastructure that play an important role on the international scene.

In view of the fact that conditions for the CTBT's entry into force are not subject to revision, we have to consider seriously a set of measures to provide for the Treaty's timely entry into force, since it is not excluded that the technologically perfect though expensive CTBT verification system will be established and ready for functioning while the Treaty itself still may not be operational.

We believe that those States that have not yet signed the Treaty and are thus delaying its implementation should reconsider their position. One cannot strive for a nuclear-weapon-free world while rejecting the CTBT.

After a few years of intense negotiations on the CTBT, the Conference on Disarmament is facing the difficult task of determining its future course. In spite of the adoption of the CD agenda for 1997, the Conference has become seriously stuck in the deliberations over its work programme. Three major priorities were identified by delegations: a fissile material "cut-off", a complete ban on anti-personnel landmines (APLs) and nuclear disarmament. As far as Ukraine is concerned, we would like to see all three issues in the CD's work programme for this year.

So far, the conclusion of a multilateral agreement banning the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices remains the demand of the time, in spite of the fact that four nuclear-weapon States have announced the unilateral cessation of such production. In past years, the process of nuclear force reduction have been actively carried out and as a result of the dismantlement of nuclear warheads, the amount of nuclear fissile materials which might be reused for military

(Mr. Gryshchenko, Ukraine)

purposes is steadily growing. The storage sites of these materials are permanent sources of environmental and terrorist threats to all nations of the world.

For this reason, we believe that the scope of the treaty should not be limited only to a ban on their production, but the possible reduction of their stocks should be considered as well. Accordingly, the title of a future agreement might be worded as a convention on the prohibition of fissile materials for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices and the reduction of their existing stockpiles. With such a wording, this item of the work programme of the CD would prove from the very beginning that a forthcoming instrument is intended to be a valuable contribution to nuclear disarmament.

This would undoubtedly increase the number of delegations wishing to start negotiations on this item, thus bring us closer to consensus. The scope of reduction of these materials has to be the centre of future negotiations on this issue. From the Ukrainian point of view the provisions of a future agreement must envisage the declaration of existing plutonium and highly enriched uranium stocks. To assure the universality of declarations, they might not necessarily indicate the purpose of stockpiling.

It would also be useful to establish the time-frames and rates of reduction of excessive stocks for each country concerned. The best solution would be the total elimination or reprocessing of the fissile materials for non-military purposes. The verification procedures of this agreement should be non-discriminatory and based on IAEA safeguards. Its main objective would be to monitor the declared fissile material production facilities for purposes of nuclear weapons or other explosive devices or those capable of such activities. At the same time, the procedures and technical means of verification should be adequate to enable detection of undeclared facilities producing fissile materials for prohibited purposes.

Finally, the future agreement, of unlimited duration, will not enter into force until all nuclear-weapon and "threshold" States ratify it. Therefore, we must obtain their support for early consideration of the "cut-off" issue and secure their constructive cooperation in the course of negotiations on a relevant agreement.

In recent years the attention of the world community has been concentrating more and more on the need to solve the humanitarian crisis arising from the large-scale use of anti-personnel landmines (APLs). This insidious type of conventional arms - as strikingly demonstrated in recent years - is fraught with danger for the civilian population in zones of conflict years and even decades after the end of hostilities.

Although initially APLs were designed for defence against potential aggressors, they have today become the source of terrorizing intimidation for millions of people, causing economic collapse in many agricultural countries by preventing farmers from cultivating large areas of arable land.

The First Review Conference of the State Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of Certain Conventional Weapons in 1995-1996 made an important advance by adopting amended Protocol II to the Convention, which imposes rigorous restrictions or prohibitions on the use of specific kinds of APLs.

In the course of this Review Conference, however, the need for a decisive breakthrough became evident. This understanding is embodied in resolution 51/45 S, "An international agreement to ban anti-personnel landmines", adopted by 155 votes with none against. In the meantime, Canada initiated the Ottawa Process which, supported by several other States, has gained strong momentum with the final objective of opening for signature by the end of 1997 a universal agreement on a total ban on APLs, including a ban on their use, development, production and transfer. We express our full solidarity with the noble aspirations of the States sponsoring the Ottawa Process and commend the results of the international meetings held in Vienna on 12-14 February and in Bonn on 24 and 25 April.

There is no doubt, however, that such an authoritative forum as the Conference on Disarmament is capable of playing and obliged to play a key role in the negotiations on a total ban on APLs. Therefore, long before the Canadian initiative emerged, Ukraine, like many other States, shared the view that the Conference on Disarmament is the best place for such talks. Even now the Conference still has a window of opportunity to prove its usefulness for solving problems requiring unordinary approaches. In this respect, the possibility of merging the Ottawa Process with talks in the relevant Ad Hoc Committee of the CD is not completely excluded.

Another approach seems to be more realistic: without competing with the Ottawa Process, the CD might complement it by negotiating a multilateral international agreement banning the production and transfer of APLs. We are convinced that the number of States supporting such an agreement would be larger and would include those States which still rely upon APLs to enhance their defensive capability.

Moreover, taking into consideration the CD's experience in the elaboration of the verification procedures of the Chemical Weapons Convention and of the CTBT, this forum might well in future start elaborating the compliance and verification procedures of the agreement on a total ban on APLs, which hopefully will be open for signature by the end of this year.

The inclusion of the issue of nuclear disarmament in the Conference on Disarmament's work programme for the current year was actively discussed during the first part of the Conference.

Today it is difficult to state publicly opposition to the idea of complete nuclear disarmament. The final document entitled "Principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament" adopted at the 1995 NPT Extension and Review Conference emphasizes the necessity for the world community to make more active efforts in the sphere of nuclear disarmament. In article VI of the NPT the nuclear States confirmed their commitment to the continuation of negotiations seeking effective measures in the field of nuclear disarmament. The Conference therefore has the relevant mandate for elaborating a programme of nuclear disarmament and determining concrete steps for its implementation.

In broaching the problem of nuclear disarmament, I cannot help but recall the exceptional contribution of Ukraine to this process. Having inherited the third largest nuclear potential, after the collapse of the USSR, our State took the unprecedented decision to completely eliminate these weapons. It is worth mentioning that, though it may have happened by chance, the beginning and the conclusion of nuclear disarmament in Ukraine coincided with the beginning and the completion of the work on the CTBT in the Conference on Disarmament. Hence, from Ukraine's perspective, complete nuclear disarmament is an achievable goal and it is necessary to find adequate ways in which to consider the issue at the Conference.

We welcome the "Proposal for a programme of action for the elimination of nuclear weapons", submitted on 7 August 1996 to the Conference by His Excellency Mr. Zahran, Ambassador of Egypt, on behalf of 28 States of the Non-Aligned Movement, in which separate stages are to be implemented in a precisely determined time framework. We support this document and propose to adopt it as a basis for further work. Ukraine also highly appreciates the conclusions and recommendations made in the report of the Canberra Commission on the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons.

As to practical nuclear disarmament, the results already achieved in the course of the reduction and elimination of strategic offensive weapons are of the utmost importance.

To a considerable extent this was due to the fruitful work of the Joint Compliance and Inspection Commission (JCIC) under the START-I Treaty, where Ukraine, as an equal partner of this multilateral implementation body, contributed to the positive trend towards global nuclear disarmament.

One more key element promoting this trend is the ABM Treaty. Preserving the viability of this Treaty, through concluding a final agreement on the demarcation of the strategic ABM and TMD systems, has remained in the focus of the negotiations in the Standing Consultative Commission during the last few years, where our State participates as an equal partner as well. We expect the parties playing the pivotal role in nuclear arms reduction to make further steps to take all possible measures for the START-II Treaty's entry into force, to continue the dialogue in order to work out and conclude a new agreement on further drastic reductions in strategic offensive weapons - START-III. As soon as the provisions of START-III are implemented, it is necessary to begin negotiations among nuclear-weapon States to reach a further level of nuclear arsenal reduction and then their complete elimination.

At this later stage, the Conference on Disarmament would have to play a decisive role in elaborating a convention on the complete prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons. To prepare the ground for this important work

Ukraine supports the creation of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament to be engaged in elaborating concrete agreements on nuclear disarmament and not to be used as a forum for stating truisms on its importance and urgency.

These could be the previously mentioned treaty banning the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons, including the limitation of their excessive stocks, or a multilateral agreement on the commitment of all States - nuclear and non-nuclear - to strive for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. Therefore, before creating such an ad hoc committee, it is necessary to prepare a list of issues for its deliberation.

In this connection, we find very pertinent Japan's proposal to nominate a special coordinator on nuclear disarmament. Ukraine endorses this idea and considers it to be realistic.

In our opinion, Egypt's proposal concerning the mandate of the ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament, which was tabled just after the conclusion of the first part of this year's session, deserves serious consideration as well. Obviously, the idea to conduct negotiations in the framework of this ad hoc committee, both on the issues of the programme on nuclear disarmament and the "cut-off" treaty, is undoubtedly productive and would help the CD in its attempts to achieve a compromise concerning the work programme for the current year.

The multilateral agreements in the field of arms control and disarmament are the fruit of the Conference on Disarmament's activity and the Conference has every reason to be proud when these pacts enter into force and become part of international law. Recently the Chemical Weapons Convention, on which the CD had worked for two decades, entered into force. This will inspire us to fruitful and effective work in future.

Last year's enlargement of the CD's membership will also contribute to this. The main motive for Ukraine in entering the CD was our desire to improve the work of this forum, to embrace a wider range of issues on its agenda and to achieve results that meet the high expectations of the world community, and we are ready to actively cooperate with other delegations to achieve this goal.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Egypt, Ambassador Zahran.

Mr. ZAHRAN (Egypt) (translated from Arabic): Mr. President, since this is the first time I am taking the floor under your presidency, allow me at the outset to express to you the congratulations of the Egyptian delegation on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament and our support for the consultations that you are carrying out so competently on the programme of work of the Conference. I would also like to express my delegation's gratitude to your predecessors, Ambassador Joun Yung Sun of the Republic of Korea and Mr. Pavel Grecu of Romania, for directing the work of the Conference so capably throughout the first part of our 1997 session and also for the consultations they conducted during their presidency. I would also like to welcome the new representative of Italy in the CD, Ambassador Giuseppe Balboni Acqua. I listened with interest to the statements made by Mr. John Holum, Director of the United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, and His Excellency Mr. Kostyantyn Gryshchenko, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine.

Before making my statement on nuclear disarmament, I wish to emphasize the fact that Egypt's position on all the topics on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament has already been clarified in Egypt's statement before this important body, which is the sole forum for multilateral negotiations on disarmament, at the beginning of the session of the Conference in January 1997.

A few weeks ago the Preparatory Committee for the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons held its first session in New York. The Chairman's paper adopted at the end of that session reaffirmed "the commitment by the nuclear-weapon States to the determined pursuit of systematic and progressive efforts to reduce nuclear weapons globally, with the ultimate goal of eliminating those weapons and of the commitment by all States to the achievement of general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control". That synopsis is consistent with the provisions of Decision No. 1 on "Principles and objectives" adopted by the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference. We are all aware of the fact that the NPT is a key international instrument to curb both vertical and horizontal proliferation. Hence, emphasizing one while marginalizing the other would detract from the credibility of the Treaty. I do not need to reiterate the commitment of the Government of Egypt to the cause of non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament. It is our view that a global non-proliferation regime to be implemented in phases would lead to the attainment of a world free from nuclear weapons.

From this perspective, and until the realization of the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, which is humanity's best assurance against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, we reaffirm the commitment of the international community to the universality of the Treaty with no exceptions. In addition, the credibility of the Treaty requires all of us to engage in serious multilateral negotiations to provide non-nuclear States with security assurances and safeguards. We also deem it essential to achieve equilibrium through a commitment by all countries to honour their obligations under that Treaty. Unless this is achieved, the non-proliferation regime would benefit some at the expense of others while excluding yet a third group which has not yet acceded to the Treaty.

After the NPT Review Conference adopted its decision on principles and objectives on 11 May 1995, we expected agreement to be reached in the Conference on Disarmament on the establishment of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament to begin negotiations in this forum on that subject, to which we accord the highest priority, as reflected in the final document adopted at the 12th Ministerial Conference of the Non-Aligned Movement held at New Delhi in April. We regret, in particular, the view expressed during the first part of the session of the Conference by some nuclear-weapon States that the issue of nuclear weapons should be handled exclusively by those who officially possess them. This view stands in stark contradiction with what was decided at the 1995 NPT Review Conference and raises questions concerning the true value that those States attribute to the decisions adopted without a vote at that Conference.

If nuclear disarmament is to be the exclusive concern of the five nuclear-weapon States alone, what is to happen in the case of the nuclear weapons that might be in the possession of other States which are not parties to the NPT and therefore have no legal obligation not to possess them? By the same token, we are concerned by the unsatisfactory implementation of article VI of the NPT, which stipulated, when it was signed in 1968, that the cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament would take place at an early date. This has not yet been achieved almost 30 years after the signing of the NPT.

While recognizing the tangible endeavours that are being made by the United States and the Russian Federation, as well as the positive bilateral commitments they have made in the field of nuclear disarmament, we also believe that it will be possible to remove this issue from the international disarmament agenda only when the total elimination of nuclear weapons has been achieved. To achieve this objective, much work needs to be done at the Conference on Disarmament in its capacity as the sole multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament. In keeping with this belief, Egypt has contributed to numerous proposals concerning the mechanism for negotiations on nuclear disarmament in the Conference on Disarmament. Bearing this in mind, the delegation of Egypt has submitted to the Conference a working paper, distributed in document CD/1453 of 1 April 1997, proposing a draft mandate for an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament to be established in the Conference on Disarmament.

That paper invites the committee to begin negotiations on a phased programme of nuclear disarmament with a view to the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. It also calls for the conclusion of a convention on the prohibition of the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and nuclear explosive devices, since we regard this matter as a disarmament measure within the framework of the nuclear disarmament programme in accordance with the decision on principles and objectives adopted by the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference. In discharging its functions, the ad hoc committee will take into account the proposed programme of action for the elimination of nuclear weapons submitted in document CD/1419 by 28 members of the Conference from the Group of 21, as well as any other proposals and future initiatives in this regard. Egypt holds the view that the proposed mandate for the ad hoc committee constitutes a balanced and flexible text which in no way prejudges the views of any delegation, and hopes that an agreement will soon be reached on this matter in order to enable the Conference to begin its long overdue work on this important issue. Therefore, I would like to request you, Mr. President, to include that Egyptian working paper in the consultations that you will be holding with members of the Conference, together with any other paper or proposal for the CD programme of work.

I would now like to turn to our regional concerns in the Middle East in order to reaffirm the importance of achieving universal adherence to the NPT. In this connection, we welcome the latest accessions to the Treaty by the United Arab Emirates, Djibouti and the Sultanate of Oman, which brings all the States of the Middle East within the scope of the Treaty with the sole exception of Israel, which, in turn, should adhere to the Treaty. Israel's continuing refusal to accede to the NPT creates an imbalanced situation and is giving rise to serious security apprehensions concerning the risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East, which would threaten the safety and security of all the peoples of the region, including Israel. It also undermines all the efforts that are being made at the international and regional levels to promote confidence-building measures, particularly the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, bearing in mind President Mubarak's initiative concerning the establishment of a zone free from all weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. For the speedy establishment of this zone, all countries in the region which have not yet done so should accede simultaneously to all relevant treaties - the NPT, the CWC and the BWC.

The adoption of a resolution on the Middle East by the 1995 NPT Review Conference and the fact that it was the only resolution concerning a specific region is a clear expression by the States parties to the Treaty of their concern over the seriousness of the situation in the Middle East resulting from the existence of ambiguous nuclear policies and unsafeguarded nuclear facilities in Israel endangering regional and international peace and security. Therefore, all States parties to the Treaty, and in particular the nuclear-weapon States, have an obligation to cooperate and to exert further efforts to ensure the full implementation of that resolution. The role of the depositary States in particular in shouldering their primary responsibilities as co-sponsors of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East is crucial in accelerating the implementation of the said resolution. The delegation of Egypt to the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2000 NPT Review Conference submitted a paper on behalf of all the Arab States parties to the Treaty (NPT/CONF.2000/PC.1/5) in which it reiterated the urgent need to assess the situation in the Middle East and to monitor the implementation of the provisions of the resolution on the Middle East with a view to the adoption of recommendations by the Preparatory Committee pertaining to ways and means to ensure the full implementation of the resolution and to ensure that all the parties concerned take the practical and urgent steps required for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. According to the formal statement by the Chairman of the first session of the Preparatory Committee, Ambassador Patokallio, time will be allocated at the second session for a discussion of the resolution on the Middle East.

Furthermore, the delegation of Egypt, together with other Arab delegations, presented a working paper to the last substantive session of the Disarmament Commission (UNDC) on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. That paper was divided into two parts. The first expressed our views on the meaning of the phrase "on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned"; while the second gave an overview of the efforts exerted by the Arab States for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. However, despite the willingness demonstrated by the Arab States to discuss substantive and practical arrangements for the establishment of that zone as well as a verifiable Middle East zone free from weapons of mass destruction, and to refrain from taking any measures incompatible with the achievement of these objectives, Israel is continuing to oppose any discussion of these issues in any forums, particularly at the regional level. In this regard, I would like to make it clear that the expression "arrangements freely arrived at" should not be interpreted in such a way as to allow a single State in the region, namely Israel, to continue enjoying exemption from the application of the international norms. Such a situation would be inconsistent with concerted efforts to achieve a comprehensive and just peace in the Middle East.

We say "no" to those who would condone such a situation in favour of any country of the region. While international sanctions are being imposed on other countries under the provisions of Chapter VII of the Charter, we say "no" to double standards and selectivity in any international forums, whether in the field of human rights or in the field of disarmament in regard to nuclear or any other weapons of mass destruction.

In conclusion, Egypt has presented a number of proposals and has taken positive steps aimed at achieving a world free from nuclear weapons in order to ensure security and stability for the survival of mankind. Our position is derived from a deep-rooted conviction that peaceful coexistence, peace-making and peace-keeping are the only way to save mankind, protect the environment and ensure respect for all fundamental human rights, particularly the right to life and to health for present and future generations. Hence, there is a need to create an appropriate environment in which all resources can be devoted to the prosperity of our peoples, particularly by mobilizing all the resources needed for economic and social development in the developing countries instead of engaging in an arms race which will lead to further tension and a proliferation of conflicts between countries and peoples.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Egypt for his statement and for the kind words addressed to me. I now give the floor to the representative of Japan, Ambassador Kurokochi.

Mrs. KUROKOCHI (Japan): Mr. President, it is a great pleasure for me to see you presiding over the Conference on Disarmament and I assure you of my delegation's full cooperation. I would like to express my delegation's warm welcome to Mr. John Holum, Director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency of the United States, and Mr. Gryshchenko, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, and thank them for their very important contribution. My warm welcome goes also to Ambassador Balboni Acqua, who recently joined us.

The current international situation provides a favourable environment for further progress in disarmament. Indeed, there have been a number of encouraging developments even since the negotiations on the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) concluded last year. Thus it is all the more disappointing that the Conference on Disarmament could not reach an agreement on a concrete work programme during its first session. My delegation would stress that its second session must not be a mere repetition of the first, but should reinvigorate disarmament efforts so that further progress might be achieved as expeditiously as possible. Indeed, the Conference on Disarmament, as the sole multilateral negotiating body on disarmament, has a particularly important role to play in addressing various issues confronting the international community.

So far in 1997, the international community has witnessed progress in disarmament relating to both weapons of mass destruction and conventional weapons.

Concerning nuclear disarmament, first of all, substantive work for the establishment of a verification system under the CTBT gets under way with the inauguration of the CTBT Provisional Technical Secretariat. The early establishment of a verification system is important in order to deter any country from conducting nuclear testing, as well as to expedite the entry into force of the Treaty. Japan, for its part, is actively participating in the work of the Preparatory Commission in Vienna. Moreover, on 25 April the Government of Japan submitted the CTBT text to the Diet for ratification.

Secondly, we note with satisfaction the result of the first Preparatory Committee for the 2000 Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference, which was held in New York just last month. At that meeting, many delegations emphasized that the new review process was qualitatively different from past practice. Thus, while important decisions were made on procedural matters, the participating States discussed, in depth, substantive matters relating to the operation of the Treaty and produced a Chairman's working paper. We consider this a very positive step and hope that the preparatory process will continue to proceed smoothly so that we can agree on forward-looking, action-oriented recommendations for the 2000 Review Conference.

I should like to add that Japan noted with great interest the statement made collectively by the five nuclear-weapon States, as well as the individual reports of nuclear-weapon States at the PrepCom regarding the concrete measures they have taken for nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament. It may be recalled that United Nations General Assembly resolution 51/45 G, which my country sponsored, requests nuclear-weapon States to inform the international community of the progress made in nuclear disarmament. We believe that increased transparency in nuclear disarmament will contribute to building confidence between the nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States.

Thirdly, we welcome the new commitment made by the United States and Russia at the recent summit meeting in Helsinki to engage in further talks on the reduction of strategic forces in the context of START, and look forward to seeing concrete measures in this regard. In this context, Japan strongly hopes that Russia will ratify START II as soon as possible.

Moreover, in February this year, the Treaty of Tlatelolco celebrated the thirtieth anniversary of its opening for signature. As described in the Chairman's working paper, which I already mentioned in relation to the first

PrepCom of the 2000 NPT Review Conference, important steps have been taken since 1995 to conclude additional nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties. We welcome this progress and will continue to follow further developments with great interest in the belief that the establishment of internationally recognized nuclear-weapon-free zones, on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned, enhances global and regional peace and security.

Turning our attention to developments relating to other weapons of mass destruction, we note that the Chemical Weapons Convention entered into force on 29 April, and heartily welcome its ratification by both the United States and China on 25 April, thus making them original States parties to the Convention. We would like to urge other countries which have not yet done so to ratify this important treaty as soon as possible.

With regard to verification measures for the Biological Weapons Convention, we are encouraged by the result of the recent Ad Hoc Group meeting in which a general convergence of views emerged to prepare a rolling text by the next meeting in July.

Some noteworthy disarmament developments have also been made with regard to conventional weapons. Perhaps most encouraging is the fact that the tide of support for a total ban on anti-personnel landmines (APL) has become irreversible. Japan, for its part, will spare no effort to contribute to the international efforts to address the dreadful problems caused by APLs. The Tokyo Conference on Anti-Personnel Landmines, which Japan hosted in March to explore mine clearance measures, is just one example of such efforts.

In addition, we are of the view that it is important for us to realize, as soon as possible, the entry into force of Revised Protocol II to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), which strengthened prohibitions or restrictions on the use of anti-personnel landmines. At present, the Diet of Japan is deliberating this Revised Protocol II, as well as Protocol IV to the CCW prohibiting "blinding laser weapons".

International efforts to elaborate ways and means of strengthening and further developing the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms are now under way. In March of this year, the Panel of Governmental Experts met to commence work on a report to the United Nations Secretary-General. The Tokyo Workshop in May considered various aspects of the issue of transparency in armaments. We look forward to seeing the further development of this Register.

A number of developments have been recorded following the second meeting of the United Nations Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms in January. In addition to the meeting held in South Africa last September, the Central American Workshop was held in El Salvador in January, and the Asian Workshop will be organized at Kathmandu this month. Furthermore, Japan, also, will host a workshop on small arms in Tokyo this month. We believe that these regional meetings will ensure that the report to be produced at the third meeting of the United Nations Panel of Governmental Experts in July will prove to be a useful and important document.

Against this background of ongoing international efforts in arms control and disarmament, it is somewhat strange that the Conference on Disarmament has not yet begun its substantive work this year. It is important that the Conference agree on a programme of work as soon as possible during this second session. My delegation continues to believe that the Conference should take up the following three tasks, namely, the commencement of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT), the establishment of some mechanism on nuclear disarmament, and the setting up of an ad hoc committee on anti-personnel landmines.

The member States of the Conference on Disarmament, with very few exceptions, support the commencement of negotiations on an FMCT based on Ambassador Shannon's report. At the first Preparatory Committee for the 2000 NPT Review Conference, the need for immediate commencement and early conclusion of such negotiations was also reaffirmed. Thus we believe that the linkage between the start of the negotiations on an FMCT and the progress of other issues must be abandoned, and that the Conference should start the FMCT negotiations immediately.

My delegation would like to see both the nuclear-weapon States and G21 delegations take more flexible positions on the issue of nuclear disarmament. We hope that the Conference will agree to appoint a special coordinator on nuclear disarmament, as we proposed at the first session, who would guide our examination of the role the Conference might play in this issue.

Concerning APLs, while Japan considers the so-called Ottawa Process to be a valuable initiative to keep momentum on the issue, we are of the view that the Conference on Disarmament is an appropriate forum for negotiations on a treaty which could cover all key countries and hence be effective in solving the problem caused by APLs. The establishment of an ad hoc committee in the Conference for this purpose is thus an urgent task. In my delegation's view, it would not be necessary for us to seek a detailed mandate for the ad hoc committee as this might prejudge the modality of negotiations. It would be sufficient if we succeed in producing an agreement to establish an ad hoc committee to negotiate, in accordance with the United Nations General Assembly resolution last year (and I quote), "an effective, legally binding international agreement to ban the use, stockpiling, production and transfer of anti-personnel landmines".

In order to make a contribution in this regard, Japan, together with Hungary, would like to submit a new proposal on a draft mandate for the ad hoc committee, which is attached to the text of my statement which was just distributed. I would like to request you, Sir, to be good enough to distribute this proposal as an official document of the Conference, and my delegation hopes that this new proposal will be considered favourably by other delegations.

If we cannot reach an agreement on an ad hoc committee immediately, we should, as proposed by Finland, Chile and Poland, appoint a special coordinator to facilitate this effort.

My delegation is fully aware of the importance of our task during this second session, and will spare no effort in contributing to its successful outcome.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Japan for her statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Hungary, Ambassador Náray.

Mr. NARAY (Hungary): Mr. President, allow me first of all to join other speakers in congratulating you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. I am convinced that your well-known diplomatic skills and wide experience will significantly contribute to the successful conclusion of our ongoing debates on the adoption of a work programme and the establishment of the subsidiary bodies. I thank you for your efforts undertaken until now to this effect.

My delegation's short statement today is devoted to the question of a total ban on anti-personnel landmines. This issue is high on the disarmament agenda of my Government. We share the concerns of the international community at the grave humanitarian and socio-economic consequences of the large-scale indiscriminate deployment of these lethal weapons. Hungary is firmly committed to a total and comprehensive ban as the most effective solution to the global landmine crisis. This stance was further developed by a corresponding resolution of my country's National Assembly adopted in December 1996. The legislature requested the Government to pursue this objective and to support the related initiatives at the various multilateral forums.

Hungary has contributed to the Ottawa Conference and its follow-up meetings as a participant and welcomes the progress made in this framework. We believe that this process has helped to create and maintain the necessary momentum to promote the cause for a total ban. We reiterate our support for the complementary and mutually reinforcing character of the efforts made in different forums.

At the same time, it is our well-considered position that the Conference on Disarmament has an indispensable role to play in the concerted efforts aimed at the conclusion of an effective legally binding international agreement to ban worldwide the use, stockpiling, production and transfer of anti-personnel landmines. Based on this approach the Hungarian delegation decided to join its efforts with those of the delegation of Japan and table together with it a draft negotiating mandate. The document just submitted by Ambassador Kurokochi on behalf of our two delegations draws on operative paragraph 1 of United Nations General Assembly resolution 51/45 S and, for that reason, we believe it could serve as an acceptable basis for further negotiations and discussions in this body and perhaps attract widespread support.

Let me conclude by expressing my delegation's sincere hope that this proposal will be given serious consideration by the members of the Conference on Disarmament. Though our clear preference is for the early establishment of an ad hoc committee with a negotiating mandate, we can also go along with the proposal to initiate the process by the appointment of a special coordinator to conduct consultations on the modalities of the future negotiations.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Hungary for his statement and for the kind words addressed to me. I now give the floor to the representative of Morocco, Ambassador Benjelloun-Touimi.

Mr. BENJELLOUN-TOUIMI (Morocco) (translated from French): Mr. President, allow me first of all to congratulate you on taking up the post of President of the Conference on Disarmament. The Kingdom of Morocco, which has excellent bilateral relations with the Russian Federation, is pleased to see a diplomat of your skill and experience taking over the task of chairing our proceedings, and I can assure you of our cooperation. Allow me also to thank your predecessors, Ambassador Sun of South Korea and Mr. Pavel Grecu, Chargé d'affaires of the Permanent Mission of Romania. I should also like to welcome our Italian colleague and say that I listened very carefully to the statements by Mr. John Holum of the United States and the Deputy Minister of Ukraine.

The year 1996 was a pivotal year in the history of the Conference on Disarmament. After long and difficult negotiations the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty was concluded. The Kingdom of Morocco signed the Treaty on 24 September 1996 in New York. Nevertheless, my country feels that it is urgent to strengthen the international legal machinery to combat nuclear proliferation as well as that for nuclear disarmament.

The end of the cold war, the indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which gave to that treaty the permanence it had been lacking, and the conclusion of the CTBT constitute significant advances for international peace and security. However, while we should welcome positive achievements, we should not minimize the scale of the task remaining. In this context, nuclear disarmament remains an absolute priority for the international community. Nuclear weapons arouse apocalyptic visions and prompt legitimate fear in public opinion. The history of the use of nuclear energy for military purposes is also that of the collective dread it has engendered. As Montesquieu wrote, "opinions are shaped not by the mind but by the heart". The responsibility we bear today is to find an adequate response to the fears and apprehensions of the international community. It was long argued that the possession of nuclear weapons was justified for the purposes of nuclear deterrence, that those weapons, however dreadful they may have been, contributed to international peace and security. The world has profoundly changed since then. The cold war which for a long time crystallized the principal global strategic stakes is now over. Major efforts have been made in the field of nuclear disarmament within the framework of a reinvigorated American-Russian dialogue. My country, which believes deeply in the virtues of dialogue and consultation, is happy to see the idea of peace gradually replacing competitiveness and the escalation of the arms race.

(Mr. Benjelloun-Touimi, Morocco)

The efforts made in the American-Russian negotiations must be welcomed with great satisfaction. They reflect a real will to work towards nuclear disarmament. They would be strengthened if they were supplemented by a multilateral, complementary approach which, without calling into question the achievements of the American-Russian dialogue, put them on a truly universal footing. The Conference on Disarmament, the sole United Nations negotiating body in the field of disarmament, could make an effective contribution to this noble cause within the framework of a committee on nuclear disarmament. No one should minimize the difficulties associated with such an enterprise, but every long-term policy contains an element of dreaming and Utopianism. Today's dreams will surely become the realities of tomorrow. This is not just wishful thinking. The Conference on Disarmament is a negotiating body which should not prevent us from setting ambitious objectives because we know that the expectations of the international community are real. While our goals should be ambitious, our approach should be constructive and pragmatic.

In our view this approach could be based on the following elements. First of all, the Conference on Disarmament is a negotiating body and not a debating chamber. Consequently, on the basis of issues of shared concern we should commence negotiations leading to the conclusion of conventions on specific problems, particularly in the field of nuclear disarmament. Secondly, to carry out its task in an effective manner, the Conference on Disarmament requires a truly universal basis. The reform of the United Nations is a matter of great topicality. The Conference on Disarmament cannot exempt itself from the thinking currently under way in this respect. Naturally, consideration of the expansion of the Conference on Disarmament would be worth while only if accompanied by real political will on the part of all to work towards this goal. Thirdly, consideration should also be given to the efficiency of the working methods of the Conference, and perhaps more ingenuity and originality should be displayed in defining innovative negotiating structures. As experience in the last two years has shown, the Conference is all too frequently paralysed by the political divisions of another age.

It would no doubt be possible to continue for weeks on end to debate such important issues as the advisability of negotiating a ban on fissile materials, a phased programme of nuclear disarmament or a ban on anti-personnel landmines. At all events the Moroccan delegation will display the necessary flexibility on these three issues which are of concern to us and will do what it can to contribute to the emergence of a consensus on these issues. However, the real issues surely lie elsewhere. What Conference on Disarmament would we wish to see emerge as we approach the year 2000? What should be the role of this body? What can its new methods of work be? Is its membership truly representative of the world in which we live today? Is its agenda really well adapted to the new international situation following the disappearance of the East-West conflict? These are all issues which I feel require reflection and response. These matters may appear to be simply procedural. In the past they were used to block progress. Yet they are directly linked to the current stalemate. This is why my delegation feels it is urgently necessary for this thinking to begin. Otherwise we run the risk of continuing our discussions within a frozen setting and on the basis of outmoded political divisions, without any real prospects of success.

It is undeniable, for example, that the political groups, as they exist today within the Conference, no longer reflect the new realities of the international system - everyone can recognize that fact. Similarly, the functioning of our groups engenders a kind of bloc logic which you hear referred to over lunch every day, whose consequences are detrimental to the smooth operation of our Conference. Perhaps the time has come to establish fresh bridges, to breach old taboos, to initiate courageous and innovative dialogues between political groups whose composition and functioning would more faithfully reflect the outlines of this new world gradually emerging before our eyes. I would like to take solely as an example the proposal just made by the Japanese delegation, or the one made at the end of the first session by the Iranian delegation, or the proposal by Egypt; perhaps we can see emerging a degree of transparency which scorns the group approach; in any event we must raise the question of new working methods. This is perhaps a new transparency which we should welcome, but it is also a subject for thought which we must address.

To ponder the future of the CD should in our view be a priority objective. Such thinking could enable the Conference to emerge from the slow death described by several speakers in which it appears intent on plunging. More than ever we need to make sure that this body does not become a kind of moribund machine reminiscent of those vivid but factual descriptions of the League of Nations described with irony by the writer-diplomat Albert Cohen. We have an obligation to achieve results, and we must succeed together in carrying out this process of reflection which I call on you to engage in regarding the future, the role, the make-up and the necessary reform of the procedures of the Conference. The task which awaits us and remains to be accomplished in the field of disarmament is immense and manifold. The stakes will be complex and the difficulties numerous. For its part, the Kingdom of Morocco continues to believe in the virtues of dialogue and consultation and remains attached to the international rule of law. Beyond differences of view, this Conference should be able to continue to exist, to develop conventions which will enable us to live, each day increasingly, in a safer world.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Morocco for his statement and for the kind words addressed to me. I now give the floor to the representative of Canada, Ambassador Moher.

Mr. MOHER (Canada): Mr. President, it is a pleasure to resume our work under your guidance. We look forward to a productive second part of our 1997 session of the Conference in the coming months. We also wish to welcome our distinguished visitors, Mr. Holum of the United States of America and Mr. Gryshchenko of Ukraine.

During the first part of our 1997 session, Canada made its views known on the CD agenda and work programme. With that discussion and decision behind us, at least temporarily, we should now move quickly forward. We appreciate that there are different views on the scope and detail of a comprehensive work programme, but three issues have emerged at the top of just about everyone's list: nuclear disarmament, FMCT and landmines.

On the first, nuclear disarmament, we welcome the statement that emerged from the Helsinki summit that will propel the two nuclear-weapon States with the largest nuclear arsenals towards even further reductions. The joint call by the United States of America and the Russian Federation to conclude START II and to engage in immediate negotiations thereafter toward START III is most welcome. Our expectations have been raised and we will want to follow developments closely to ensure they are fulfilled. And we look forward to the early engagement by the other three nuclear-weapon States in an extension of that process.

We also welcome the outcome of the recently concluded first Preparatory Commission of the strengthened review process for the NPT. The document which emerged from that PrepCom demonstrates that States parties have indeed created a qualitatively new and enhanced review process. As a result of the progress on substantive issues, we will have in place for the second Preparatory Commission next year a set of documents which will provide the basis for substantive work to be carried on as we move towards the Review Conference in 2000. Canada was especially satisfied at the wide range of issues on which States parties have already expressed consensus, including calls for progress on universality of the Treaty, early entry into force of the CTBT, negotiation in the CD of a cut-off convention, nuclear disarmament, nuclear-weapon-free zones, security assurances, the IAEA 93 + 2 programme and peaceful uses of nuclear energy. This success bodes well for future work in the NPT context and ensures that next year's session can begin where this one left off.

While the NPT process remains for Canada the primary forum where nuclear disarmament issues are discussed, it is not, nor should it be, the only forum. The CD has unique strengths and capabilities, not the least of which is its ability to discuss and ultimately define and negotiate on issues that should be the subject of multilateral negotiation. In this context, Canada has identified nuclear disarmament as a central issue that the CD must address. We have called for the establishment of a mechanism, an ad hoc committee if you will, for the substantive discussion of nuclear disarmament with a view to identifying if and when one or more specific dimensions thereof should be the subject of negotiation. The CTBT was one such example. We have also said that negotiations already endorsed by this body, i.e. on cut-off, should be immediately pursued on the basis of earlier agreement. We continue to believe that the successful conclusion of the an FMCT would be a positive multilateral contribution to the dynamic pursuit of our nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation objectives. Flexibility in deciding upon mechanisms to pursue this work remains desirable and several approaches could be considered. Moreover, it remains essential to recognize that, while issues in one field are relevant to others, progress on any specific measure should not be conditional on progress in any other.

The next issue is anti-personnel mines. On 21 January and again on 6 February we made our views known on the general issue of APMs in the CD. We continue to be prepared to work in this body on APMs; but the mandate for doing so must be clear and it must complement the ongoing work of the Ottawa Process, not be a transparent effort to compete with or dilute the Ottawa Process. That Process, we emphasize, is the demonstration of a straightforward commitment by those countries currently in a position to do so to implement United Nations General Assembly resolution 51/45 S. Based on our analysis of the positions of many in this body, it is our understanding that the CD as such is not able to agree to such a comprehensive mandate implementing fully that United Nations General Assembly resolution. We acknowledge that reality.

Given that understanding on our part, but recognizing the desire of many to explore the prospects for some work on anti-personnel landmines in this body, I do confirm that Canada does not object to the appointment of a special coordinator to conduct consultations as proposed by Finland, Chile and Poland at the end of the first part of our 1997 session. May I also, at this point, particularly welcome the Japanese-Hungarian proposal made here this morning.

Let me reinforce that last point by emphasizing that, should members of the CD wish to undertake work on a specific dimension of the broader anti-personnel landmine issue, we are willing to consider such proposals in an open-minded way. This includes the idea put forward by some that the CD might undertake to negotiate a ban on the export, import and transfer of anti-personnel landmines, although we must admit to having reservations at this point about the desirability and viability of such a mandate. But, as already noted, we are willing to see this idea (among others) fully explored by a special coordinator.

Having set out these views, I emphasize that Canada for its part remains totally committed to the Ottawa Process objective of concluding, for overwhelmingly humanitarian purposes, a legally binding agreement to be signed in December 1997, to ban the production, stockpiling, transfer and use of AP mines. The comprehensiveness of that mandate, including specifically use, remains the critical factor. The commitment of others is growing. Successful meetings in Vienna and Bonn, and an extensive range of efforts on a regional level, are contributing to this momentum. We look forward to the Brussels high-level meeting in June and the conclusion of negotiations in Oslo in September. The Government of Austria continues its admirable effort to refine and adapt its draft treaty text which provides a solid basis for work in the Ottawa Process. We are determined to proceed without interruption to meet the objective of signing the treaty in Ottawa in December and thereafter of working towards the widest possible acceptance of that text. Intensive work on the global APM scourge is well under way and widely supported. We welcome the participation of all in a position to do so to participate in the Ottawa Process to attain its clearly set objective this year.

In January, Canada put forward its views on a draft provisional agenda for our work. We circulated at that time a list of provisional items which, subject to further consultations on organizational and related arrangements, we considered could constitute a basis for moving ahead. This draft provisional agenda captured our views on the issues I have already discussed. It also elaborated our views on conventional disarmament and the need for the CD to consider the negotiation of a legally binding instrument to prevent the weaponization of outer space. For the sake of brevity, I have attached a summary of our proposals to the statement this morning and request that this attachment be made an official document of this Conference.

I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the work done in the Ad Hoc Group dealing with strengthening the BTWC. We look forward to the next session of the Group in July which will initiate work on a "rolling text" basis in order to conclude a legally binding instrument that will strengthen our confidence in compliance with the Convention, including through the establishment of an effective verification regime appropriate to dealing with a weapon of mass destruction.

Finally, Canada welcomes the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention on 29 April. The decision of the United States of America to proceed with ratification of the Treaty is most welcome. We also note the recent decision of China to ratify the Treaty. We call again on the Russian Federation, as the only declared possessor of chemical weapons not yet to have ratified the Treaty, to do so at the earliest possible moment. As a step in that direction, we welcome the political commitment by the Russian Federation contained in the letter by President Yeltsin before us today in document CD/1454.

In conclusion, let me assure you of my delegation's willingness to contribute to your ongoing efforts to get the CD working constructively on the issues before us.

Mr. ACUÑA (Chile) (translated from Spanish): On behalf of my delegation, I have asked for the floor to express, before the Conference, our delegation's support for the proposal made by Japan and Hungary concerning a mandate for an ad hoc committee on the prohibition of anti-personnel mines.

Mr. BALBONI ACQUA (Italy): First of all, Mr. President, I want to thank you for your welcome, and I thank also the other colleagues for the kind words addressed to me this morning at the beginning of my assignment. I join other speakers in congratulating you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. I arrived in Geneva a few days ago and I have to deal with issues which I fully believe have a decisive political importance and a strong impact on current international affairs.

After my arrival, the problem of the prohibition of anti-personnel landmines is one of the issues that in particular attracted my attention. I wish therefore to express my Government's interest in the early conclusion of an effective and legally binding agreement to ban the use, stockpiling, production and transfer of anti-personnel landmines. I add that the Italian Government is thoroughly engaged in promoting in the Italian Parliament early approval of a national law on the matter.

I am aware that this Conference in the present circumstances is facing difficult challenges. I wish to express my hope that on the important issue of APLs, as well as in other matters under our attention, it will be possible to attain concrete results in the months ahead.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the distinguished delegate of Italy for his statement and for his kind words addressed to the Chair. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor at this stage?

(The President)

(continued in Russian)

And now, in my national capacity as representative of the Russian Federation to the Conference on Disarmament, I have the honour to inform you that the Russian President, B.N. Yeltsin, sent a message to the first session of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons now taking place in The Hague. The State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation also sent a message to the session.

In his message the Russian President emphasized that Russia welcomes the entry into force of the Convention. In the period leading up to ratification of the Convention, Russia intends to refrain from any actions which would detract from the purpose and goals of the Convention. Since the time of signature, the President says in his message, we have honoured and will continue to honour our obligations not to develop and not to produce chemical weapons, not to transfer them directly or indirectly to anyone, not to use chemical weapons, not to carry out any military preparations for their use or to assist, encourage or induce anyone to engage in any activity prohibited under the Convention, and not to use chemical riot control agents as means of warfare. We have taken steps to ensure that toxic chemicals and their precursors are developed, produced and acquired, stored, transferred and used only for purposes not prohibited under the Convention. Preparations are also under way in Russia for the actual destruction of chemical weapons. Federal legislation for the elimination of such weapons has been adopted.

In its appeal the State Duma notes, inter alia, that it has embarked on the process of ratification of the Convention with the intention of completing the process if possible by the autumn of this year if the necessary conditions are met. Noting that difficulties involved in the ratification of the Convention stem from the exceptionally serious economic situation in Russia, the Duma emphasizes that, from the point of view of completion of the process of ratification of the Convention by Russia, it is important that in its decisions, the OPCW Conference should take into account the issues of significance for our country, such as the possibility of extending the deadlines for elimination of chemical weapon stocks, the procedure governing payment for inspection activities, the conversion of former CW production facilities and an increase in financial assistance.

The Russian President in his message also stated that Russia would be prepared to provide OPCW with information on its stocks of chemical weapons and their location and to take part in measures to provide assistance where possible in CW protection through economic and scientific technological cooperation. Both the President and the State Duma reaffirm Russia's readiness to maintain close relations with the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, during this period of transition, which must presuppose the establishment and functioning of machinery giving Russia an opportunity to participate in the drafting and adoption of decisions taking into account its political and defence interests and would also create conditions for Russia's entry into OPCW in such a way that it could immediately play a full role in the organization's activities. It is hoped that the considerations set forth in this document will meet with understanding and that constructive decisions will be taken thereon. This will certainly facilitate ratification of the Convention by the Russian Federation.

I have requested the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament to distribute the message from the Russian President and the appeal by the State Duma as official documents of the Conference. I understand that they are now in the hands of delegations as document CD/1454.

(continued in English)

With regard to the programme of work of the Conference, the consultations that I have held with individual delegations and group coordinators indicate that more time is needed to allow delegations to consider the proposal made by the Islamic Republic of Iran, as contained in document CD/1450, and the one made by Chile, Finland and Poland in document CD/1452. As you remember, at our last plenary meeting, on 27 March, Ambassador Nasseri of the Islamic Republic of Iran made a procedural proposal to the effect that informal open-ended consultations be held on his proposal when we resumed our session in May. This proposal was the subject of the Presidential consultations yesterday. At these consultations, however, no consensus appeared on this procedural proposal. There was a feeling that more time is needed for groups in order to take a position in this regard. It also appears that while there is, in general, no opposition in principle to holding informal open-ended consultations, the subject matter of such consultations is not yet decided upon, while at least one Group felt that this subject matter should not be confined to the Iranian proposal. I therefore urge all delegations to give serious consideration to all proposals before us so that we may be in a position to advance our process at the next Presidential consultations.

I see the representative of Kenya wishes to take the floor. I give you the floor, Madam.

Mrs. MOGAKA (Kenya): As this is the first time that my delegation is taking the floor during your presidency, Sir, allow me to express my delegation's gratitude at the skilful manner in which you are guiding our work. I requested the floor today on behalf of the G.21 to briefly address the proposal tabled today by Japan and Hungary. As this is the first time that this proposal has been drawn to the attention of our Group, the Group is asking for more time to consider this, along with all the other proposals that are before the Conference.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Kenya for her statement and for her kind words. If there are no other speakers, I shall adjourn this meeting.

The next plenary meeting of the Conference will take place on Thursday, 22 May 1997, at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 12.10 p.m.

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.764
22 May 1997

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE SEVEN HUNDRED AND SIXTY-FOURTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 22 May 1997, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Berdennikov (Russian Federation)

GE.97-61366 (E)

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 764th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

At the outset, allow me to extend a warm welcome on behalf of the Conference, and on my own behalf, to the newly appointed representative of Germany to the Conference on Disarmament, Ambassador Günther Seibert, who is attending the Conference for the first time today. I wish to assure him of our cooperation and support.

I have on my list of speakers for today the representatives of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, India and Poland. I now give the floor to the representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Ambassador Weston.

Sir Michael WESTON (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland): First, Mr. President, allow me to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency. You are carrying out your tasks with the dedication and professionalism one would expect of someone with whom it is always an enormous pleasure to work and for whom I have the greatest personal respect. Borrowing and adapting slightly the words which the late Lord Caradon used when speaking of Deputy Foreign Minister Kuznetsov:

> "When prospects are dark and hopes are dim,
> We know that we must turn to him.
> When storms and tempests fill the sky,
> Berdennikov's your boy's the cry.
> He comes like a dove from the Russian Ark,
> And light appears where all was dark.
> His coming quickly turns the tide,
> The propaganda floods subside.
> And now that he has changed the weather,
> In complementarity we work together.
> God bless the Russian delegation.
> I hope this worked in translation."

I should like to draw the attention of the Conference to statements made yesterday by the United Kingdom Prime Minister, Mr. Blair, and by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Cook, in the House of Commons in response to parliamentary questions on the subject of anti-personnel landmines. In his statement, the Prime Minister said, inter alia:

> "... we will ban the import, export, transfer and manufacture of anti-personnel landmines. We will also phase out the United Kingdom stocks of such anti-personnel landmines. We will, in addition, make sure that we ban the trade through the United Kingdom of all such landmines. They have done enormous carnage often to wholly innocent civilians including children, and the sooner that Britain gives a lead in this, the better. It is the right and the civilized thing to do."

(Sir Michael Weston, United Kingdom)

In his statement, which followed soon after that of the Prime Minister, the Foreign Secretary said:

> "We shall implement our manifesto commitment to ban the import, export, transfer and manufacture of all forms of anti-personnel landmines.
>
> "We will accelerate the phasing out of our stocks of anti-personnel landmines, and complete it by 2005 or when an effective international agreement to ban their use enters into force, whichever comes first. In the meantime, we have introduced a complete moratorium on their operational use, while we participate constructively in the Ottawa Process and push in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva for a wider ban.
>
> "That moratorium will only be suspended if we judge that for a specific operation the security of our armed forces would be jeopardized without the possibility of the use of anti-personnel landmines. In such an exceptional case we would report to Parliament the decision, and the circumstances which led to it.
>
> "We shall also examine how we can make more progress in removing mines already laid across the world."

I believe that these statements speak for themselves. I might make quite clear, however, lest there be any room for doubt about our position with respect to work on this issue here in the Conference on Disarmament: the United Kingdom continues strongly to support the immediate establishment of an ad hoc committee on anti-personnel landmines with a negotiating mandate.

We regret that it has not yet proved possible to reach a consensus on the establishment of such an ad hoc committee. In the interests of achieving such a consensus, the United Kingdom fully supports the immediate appointment of a special coordinator to conduct consultations on the most appropriate arrangement to deal with the question of anti-personnel landmines under agenda item 6.

In the course of such consultations, we would expect that the special coordinator would naturally wish to take account of relevant proposals which have already been put forward in this Conference. In this respect, I might also draw the attention of the Conference to the comments which the Secretary of State made in a press release concerning his statement, in which he said:

> "We will also redouble our efforts at the Geneva Conference on Disarmament to get the main export countries to stop selling landmines."

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland for his statement and for his very kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of India, Ambassador Ghose.

Ms. GHOSE (India): Mr. President, this is the first time I take the floor in the plenary this year, and I would like to emphasize how pleased we are to see the CD in your experienced and competent hands. I cannot hope to match the eloquence of the previous speaker, but I am sure that you will be able to find ways in which your presidency will conclude with a satisfactory result. You have the assurance of the cooperation of the Indian delegation in your efforts. Appreciation is also due to your predecessors for their determined efforts to carry out a trying and complex mandate. May I also welcome all our colleagues who have joined the CD this year and say, since I am taking the floor for the first time, how much we miss some of the extraordinary persons who were our colleagues till a short while ago.

The multilateral disarmament agenda, as we see it, gives us some satisfaction and some concern. We are extremely encouraged with the entry into force last month of the Chemical Weapons Convention. In this connection we welcome the ratification of the Convention by China and the United States and the statements made to the first meeting of the States parties by President Yeltsin and the Russian Duma. In our view, this Convention is significant not only because it bans the development, production, stockpiling and use of one of the weapons of mass destruction, but also because it is the very first effective and equitable disarmament treaty. Some progress has also been made in our efforts to strengthen the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC), and we look forward to receiving the rolling text of the Chairman at an early date so that actual negotiations can begin in July this year. However, I have to place on record my disappointment that consensus on convening a special session on disarmament eluded us at the Disarmament Commission this year, because of the reluctance of some States to address, multilaterally, the issue of the elimination of nuclear weapons, the third and remaining weapon of mass destruction. It would appear that it is this same issue that has held up agreement in the CD since the beginning of the year, so that despite intensive consultations all that we have been able to achieve so far is the adoption of an agenda.

India has, since the beginning of this session, been participating actively in the consultations, since we believe that the CD must fulfil its role effectively as a negotiating body. Our priorities in the disarmament agenda were clearly spelt out last year in this forum as well as in the General Assembly. We, therefore, have participated in this exercise with the expectation that there would, at the very least, be consideration of a way forward on the issue of nuclear disarmament. This is not just an issue of paramount importance to us, but also for the international community. Over the last several months, calls for the immediate commencement of negotiations leading to the elimination of nuclear weapons have been made from many quarters, including the G-21 proposal of 14 March 1996 in the CD for the establishment of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament and the programme of action presented to the CD late last year by 28 countries.

Other distinguished voices have also been raised. The Canberra Commission emphasizes three fundamental reasons against the continued possession of nuclear weapons: their inadequate military utility, the risk of accidental or unauthorized launch and the fact that the possession of nuclear weapons by only five countries was an unacceptable and unsustainable situation. The Commission's report devotes considerable attention to the arguments usually put forward by the nuclear-weapon States and others who doubt the need for a nuclear-weapon-free world and authoritatively answers each of the objections raised. The Commission, on which, I might add, India was not represented, has suggested an urgent programme of action, commencing with an unequivocal and unambiguous commitment to be made by the nuclear-weapon States for the elimination of nuclear weapons. This report has been formally presented to the Conference on Disarmament and yet we have had no discussions or consideration of the concrete proposals contained in it. Other voices arguing the moral untenability of nuclear weapons include the proposal of the Stimson Center of the United States and the declaration of the 60 retired admirals and generals from all continents - all of whom have been urging the early commencement of negotiations for the total elimination, not only the reduction, of nuclear weapons.

Most significantly, the historic advisory opinion given by the International Court of Justice unanimously called for the urgent commencement and conclusion of negotiations for the elimination of nuclear weapons. We believe that it is incumbent on the CD to be responsive to the increasingly insistent international opinion that substantive and meaningful steps be taken towards the goal of eliminating all nuclear weapons.

In this context, we welcome the joint statement on "Parameters on future reductions in nuclear forces" issued by the Presidents of the Russian Federation and the United States. We have noted with appreciation the reaffirmation of the commitment of President Clinton and President Yeltsin to take further concrete steps to reduce the nuclear danger, and that these steps, both START II and the proposed START III, are envisaged to be completed within specific time-frames. We look forward to all nuclear-weapon States joining this process early.

The argument has been put forward that since there is progress in nuclear weapons reductions at the bilateral level, the CD cannot, and indeed should not, undertake nuclear disarmament negotiations, that insistence on discussing nuclear disarmament in the CD could be a setback to the disarmament process, since disarmament is based on security interests. Perhaps we should be clear about the definitions of terms we utilize: no one would wish, I'm sure, to halt or stall an ongoing bilateral and plurilateral process of nuclear weapons reductions: however, to us, nuclear disarmament is the goal, not only a process. Also, if the bilateral and plurilateral negotiations depend, quite validly, on the security perceptions of those engaged in this process, the security perceptions of those who do not possess nuclear weapons also need to be taken into account. And it is here that the CD can and must play its role, and there are specific proposals we can consider: for example, earlier this year a proposal was made to negotiate a commitment by all States for the elimination of nuclear weapons in an agreed time-frame; there is the proposal of the 28 countries for a phased time-bound programme including a proposal for a convention on no use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. There are several such proposals. We believe the CD is the place, the forum with the capacity to negotiate such agreements.

India was one of the lead sponsors in the United Nations General Assembly in 1993 in proposing a resolution on a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT). We had participated in the consensus reached in 1995, contained in the Shannon report just before the NPT Review and Extension Conference, but we had also expressed, it will be recalled, our reservations at the time on the tenuous nature of the compromise. Subsequent developments and the recent statements by a number of delegations indicate that these reservations are widely shared. The issue of stockpiles, the inclusion of tritium, the problem of surplus stocks, are some of the grey areas of the Shannon report which appear even more grey after two years. It is our conviction that these can be clarified if we adopt a clear work programme that places the mandate for an FMCT firmly within a multilateral nuclear disarmament process. India remains convinced that an FMCT can be a useful and necessary step, but as part and parcel of a negotiated, phased programme for the elimination of nuclear weapons. It is for this reason that we, with other members of the CD, including most members of the G-21, have proposed the establishment of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament.

Our policies in this respect have remained consistent. We are aware that nuclear weapons cannot be eliminated overnight. We realize that a step-by-step approach is necessary, but we are also convinced, that if progress towards nuclear disarmament is to be genuine, these steps must take place within a reasonable and specified time-frame. These steps cannot be repetitive efforts to tighten an unequal nuclear regime, but must be a progression towards a nuclear-weapon-free world. This was the context, it will be recalled, in which we had also visualized a comprehensive test-ban treaty.

However, we are also prepared to start work on other items of the agenda: we believe that some meaningful work could be done if the Ad Hoc Committee on Outer Space is revived: the resolution adopted in the last session of the United Nations General Assembly has given us a mandate to start this work, and it has, we understand, been proposed for inclusion in the programme of work by Canada. We also have noted with appreciation the efforts of Iran to adopt a different approach to the programme of work. We are not averse to considering commencing work on any of the other areas on which there might be consensus.

One issue on which considerable attention has been focused this year has been on the issue of a treaty to ban anti-personnel landmines (APLs). We are also all aware of the initiatives taken in this regard outside the CD. India's position on a treaty to ban APLs was stated by the External Affairs Minister in his address to the United Nations General Assembly in October 1996, when he said: "India is in favour of a non-discriminatory and universal ban on anti-personnel mines, which cripple or kill large number of civilians".

During the negotiations for strengthening Protocol II of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), India, in response to the damage and destruction caused by the indiscriminate and irresponsible use of landmines to civilian life and livelihood, had made several proposals. Our proposals, which received little support at that stage, included a ban on transfers, a ban on the use of remotely delivered mines, and a ban on the use of anti-personnel landmines in internal conflicts. Unfortunately, as I have just stated, none of these proposals received much support. We therefore accepted whatever it was felt was achievable last March. We are now in the process of completing formalities to ratify the amended Protocol II at an early date.

India has remained flexible in the current debate over the forum for negotiations for achieving a global ban on APLs. It is clear that an effective and universal ban would be achieved only if the legitimate concerns of all countries are addressed in the negotiations. We believe that a pragmatic, phased approach towards a global ban could be a suitable framework for addressing the security concerns of several countries who still use APLs, in compliance with humanitarian law, for defensive purposes against enemy forces. Our objective is to get an effective and universal treaty - one which will indeed prevent further indiscriminate casualties among civilians. While moving towards a ban on APLs, the international community needs to redouble its efforts for mine clearance and for the transfer of resources and technologies for this purpose so that the mines which are today actually causing death and destruction are removed.

We are prepared to work with all our colleagues to agree on a feasible and practical programme of work for the CD. However, I wish to reiterate once more our position on agenda item 1: Nuclear disarmament remains our primary objective, and our priority. For as long as nuclear weapons continue in the possession of a few countries, international security remains threatened and unstable. We hope that this forum will be able to respond to the expectations that the international community has of it.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of India for her statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Poland, Ambassador Dembinski.

Mr. DEMBINSKI (Poland): Mr. President, since your term of office as President of the Conference on Disarmament is about to expire, I am pleased to add to the customary congratulations our sincere appreciation of your wise leadership and efforts which you have been making to ensure that the second part of the CD session is more rewarding than has been the case so far. I should like to take this opportunity to express to your predecessor, the distinguished representative of Romania, our gratitude for his dedication and sense of urgency with which he pursued the same objective.

At this time let me also extend a warm welcome in our midst to the new representatives who have joined us at this table, the distinguished Ambassadors Giuseppe Balboni Acqua of Italy and Günter Seibert of Germany. I look forward to close and fruitful cooperation with them in our common endeavours. I would also like to congratulate Ms. Katharine Crittenberger on her accession to the first line at this table.

(Mr. Dembinski, Poland)

The primary motive behind my brief statement today is a sense of profound disappointment over our work programme, or rather the lack of it. It is with a sense of growing frustration - present also in the interventions of other speakers - that my delegation sees the Conference on Disarmament unable to overcome the embarrassing stalemate and recognize the grave jeopardy into which this situation puts the future of the Conference. It is frustrating to see the deplorable loss of precious time that could be put to productive use, in the interest of peace and international security. It is a frustration at the waste of scarce United Nations funds. It is also a frustration at the sense of dissatisfaction which the outside world must feel at our performance this year. Surely, one can argue that after years of strenuous efforts, resulting in two major multilateral accords, the CD members deserve time off. Of course, this line of thinking need not go particularly well with legislators and taxpayers in our respective countries. Sometimes it is suggested that the Conference on Disarmament is not an assembly line where multilateral disarmament accords are put together one after another, year after year. But then, if we want the CD to live up to its image, if we want it to retain its relevance - so far beyond question - we, its members, must say that, well, enough is enough. We have no more time to waste in the CD, especially at a moment when its two latest products - the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty - are receiving independent international status.

As we know, no CD member is obligated in the exercise of sovereign rights to accept or adhere to any treaty worked out and adopted by the Conference on Disarmament. It would, therefore, seem only fair to expect that by the same token, members would refrain from blocking proceedings of this body. After all, preventing others, often a majority, from negotiating such international instruments as they deem important or urgently needed may be construed as denying them the chance to exercise their rights. In Poland's view, we are duty-bound to reach an agreement without further delay on a programme of work that includes constructive negotiations on two issues, both with clear treaty potential: the prohibition of the production of fissile materials for weapons and other military purposes and a ban on anti-personnel landmines. In our considered opinion, the Conference on Disarmament has no right to temporize any longer in that regard for a number of reasons. Here are some of them: The cold war confrontation and its threats are now but an echo of a distant past; the NPT features as a permanent mainstay of a global non-proliferation regime; nuclear disarmament is making steady progress and, as confirmed by the recent Russian-American summit meeting in Helsinki, will continue on this path; all five nuclear-weapon Powers, once again, in an important collective declaration at the PrepCom meeting in New York, are reaffirming their commitments under the Non-Proliferation Treaty; finally, let us be mindful of the relevant General Assembly decisions: resolution 48/75 L on cut-off, which was approved by consensus, and resolution 51/45 S on APLs, which was approved without a dissenting vote. Both of these resolutions call on the CD to take specific action on their subject matter.

These considerations notwithstanding, our present quandary has no justification in the CD record either. As we recall, the Conference on Disarmament resolved to establish an ad hoc committee on a cut-off; and agreed on the broad "Shannon formula" as its mandate back in 1995. So, as far as substance is concerned, the ground has been already broken. That consensus decision stands if one truly respects the rules of procedure. To my knowledge no one has ever questioned these rules, much less denounced them. Thus in regard to cut-off, we would not be starting from scratch. All we need is to take a procedural decision to name the Committee Chairman and have that subsidiary body discharge its mandate. By allowing, *inter alia*, for the consideration of stocks, the language of the mandate takes due account of all legitimate concerns. If we disclaim linkage, one wonders why agreement is still elusive on cut-off.

Let me now turn to the anti-personnel landmines (APLs) issue. The Polish delegation has been on record for quite some time, both in the CD and in the United Nations General Assembly First Committee, as believing that for humanitarian, international security and disarmament reasons, the question of anti-personnel landmines should be urgently addressed. We kept indicating that, in our view, the CD could conceivably serve as a suitable venue. However, we welcomed the "Ottawa Process" and had no hesitation to associate with its ultimate goals.

To promote these goals and heeding calls of the international community, including those emanating from the 1996 Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) Review Conference, the relevant United Nations General Assembly resolutions and the Ottawa meeting last September, Poland imposed a temporary moratorium on international transfers of APLs. I can now formally inform the CD that this moratorium, on its expiry at the end of 1997, will be replaced by a permanent ban of indefinite duration. The Polish Parliament has also started appropriate ratification procedures in respect of the "landmine" Protocol II to the CCW Convention.

The Polish delegation is greatly encouraged by the growing recognition that there need be neither contradiction nor unhealthy competition between the CD and the "Ottawa Process" - indeed, that there is a complementarity of efforts. We would wish that recognition to be translated without further delay into concrete action by the CD. To this end, at the close of the first part of our session, Poland joined Chile and Finland in suggesting that a special coordinator be appointed with a view to exploring, through intensive consultations, the most appropriate arrangement through which the Conference on Disarmament could deal with the question of APLs. The three delegations suggested, it now appears over-optimistically, that he should present a report to the CD by the end of May.

Having said that, let me make explicit our support for the initiative which Hungary and Japan took last Thursday in submitting a draft mandate for an appropriate ad hoc committee. Indeed, as far as the Polish delegation is concerned, we would have preferred the CD to take positive action on that proposal and we urge it to do so without delay.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Poland for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. That concludes my list of speakers for today. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor at this stage? I see the Ambassador of Germany. You have the floor, Sir.

Mr. SEIBERT (Germany): Mr. President, since it is the first time I am taking the floor in the plenary session of the Conference on Disarmament, I should like to take this opportunity to express my deep satisfaction at seeing you assume the presidency of this Conference, and we are very grateful for the dedication and the wisdom with which you are carrying out your task. I should also like to thank you and Ambassador Dembinski for your warm words of welcome.

It is for me both an honour and a particular challenge to be appointed Permanent Representative to the Conference on Disarmament. In the course of its history, and particularly during recent years, the Conference on Disarmament has achieved outstanding successes. Treaties such as the ban on chemical weapons and the comprehensive test-ban treaty are making a lasting contribution to peace and security. The CD has thus set very high standards for itself.

I am looking forward to working with you and all the other distinguished Permanent Representatives towards making the CD live up to these standards in the future in order to make this world a safer and more peaceful place.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Germany for his statement and for his kind words. Now I give the floor to the representative of Australia.

Mr. CAMPBELL (Australia): Mr. President, as this is the first, and possible the last, opportunity I will have to acknowledge your assumption of the presidency, let me say that my delegation has welcomed and appreciated the excellent way in which you have guided, and continue to guide, our deliberations in keeping with the pattern set by your predecessors this year. I also take the opportunity to welcome new colleagues to the Conference.

Australia's commitment to progress in the Conference on Disarmament, after years of successes, is well known. Also well-known is our commitment to the negotiation of a legally binding international regime which effectively outlaws anti-personnel landmines as a weapon of war and civilian terror, and which complements all other processes seeking this end. With that in mind, I have the pleasure to table on behalf of Australia the following draft decision in the Conference on Disarmament, and I will read what it is I propose. It is headed:

"Draft decision

"Without prejudice to its ongoing efforts to establish the programme of work for its 1997 session and in order to facilitate them the Conference on Disarmament decides:

"1. To appoint a special coordinator to conduct consultations on the most appropriate arrangement to deal with the question of anti-personnel landmines under agenda item 6.

"2. The Special Coordinator shall take into consideration all relevant proposals, present and future.

"3. The Special Coordinator shall present an early report to the Conference on Disarmament."

I would like to ask you to convene the Conference in informal consultations immediately following this plenary session to discuss this proposal. I am aware that there are many views on this subject in this room, many ideas on language, some of which have already been formally tabled in this Conference. This language, as you know, has been carefully crafted to seek a way through these various positions and can be further examined in these informal consultations in what I hope will be a constructive and positive spirit.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Ambassador of Australia for his statement and his kind words.

(continued in Russian)

Distinguished delegates, you have heard the proposal made by the distinguished Ambassador of Australia, who made a proposal which he read out and also proposed that we immediately convene consultations to consider that proposal. I can see that the distinguished Ambassador of Morocco has asked for the floor.

Mr. BENJELLOUN-TOUIMI (Morocco) (translated from French): I would like to thank the Ambassador of Australia for his proposal. In general, the Australian delegation has always made us accustomed to constructive proposals, and I think this is one of them. I would like to reiterate that my delegation is never against informal discussions of this type, because this always enables us to share our viewpoints and to learn about the ins and outs of the issues put before us. But I must say as of now that what I would like in order to have a useful discussion is perhaps to get the proposal and send it to our capitals and then afterwards we could discuss it. But I am definitely not refusing to discuss the matter. Nevertheless I can tell you as of now that I have no instructions from my capital on this sort of question, insofar as I get the impression that views are divided on this issue, which has been mentioned since the beginning of this session. So with that comment I will not oppose these consultations, but I can tell you at the outset that by far the greatest part of my participation will consist of listening.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Russian): I thank the distinguished Ambassador of Morocco for his statement. I understood him to say that Morocco will not object to convening an informal meeting. I see that the distinguished representative of Cuba has asked for the floor. I give him the floor.

Mr. AMAT FORES (Cuba) (translated from Spanish): Simply, and very briefly, it seems to us that what the distinguished Ambassador of Morocco has said may be applicable to other countries. It is to us. I think it would facilitate the work that is being proposed if we could obtain the proposal and analyse it and consult with our foreign ministries, and then seek guidance which would enable us to come much better prepared to tackle a discussion and a debate thoroughly and seriously. Independently of the position that our country holds, we would also be ready to take part in this analysis, this debate, but I think the outcome might be a bit vague if at the end we could not take a decision and we would not be able to reach any conclusion. So we support what the distinguished representative of Morocco said and we feel this is the way we ought to act.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Russian): I thank the distinguished representative of Cuba for his statement. I am in a somewhat difficult position. On the one hand, I have a proposal from the distinguished Ambassador of Australia to convene consultations now to consider this question. Two speakers who spoke after that proposal have said that on the whole they do not object but they have doubts about the possibility of reaching any concrete conclusions at the end of such a discussion. In my view, on s'engage et on voit - you get involved and then you see what happens. So, if there are no objections, I would propose that we should now suspend our meeting, and in 10 minutes convene in room 1 open-ended consultations on the proposal made by the distinguished Australian Ambassador, and hold such consultations. We will see what transpires and then return to this room and conclude our meeting. Are there any objections to that approach? I give the floor to the distinguished Ambassador of Morocco.

Mr. BENJELLOUN-TOUIMI (Morocco): I should like to make two remarks: I would rather have the meeting here because there are too many people, and I do not think we can all fit in room 1. That is my first remark. My second remark is that we do not need to come back here because nothing will change between now and then. As I told you, I do not have instructions and I do not see why we should come back here. A third remark is perhaps that we should extend our discussions to any other subject that any delegation might wish to raise regarding the programme of work.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Russian): I thank the distinguished representative of Morocco for his comments. As for the room in which we should meet, I have no preference. I am prepared to change my proposal so that we would meet here. But as regards resuming the plenary session, that clearly is necessary because we will reach some conclusion. Perhaps Morocco's position may be the very one that he referred to. But we will probably hear the views of other delegations as well. The distinguished representative of Sri Lanka has asked for the floor.

Mr. GOONETILLEKE (Sri Lanka): Briefly, I should like to make two points. One refers to the comment made by the Ambassador of Morocco, and that is that it would be desirable for us to meet in this room rather than in room 1, given the number of delegations. Secondly, if we are going to have any discussion on the proposal made by the distinguished Ambassador of Australia, it would be helpful for us to have the text of the proposal before we start consultations.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Russian): I thank the distinguished representative of Sri Lanka. I would like to inquire of the representatives of the secretariat when we can get the text introduced by the distinguished representative of Australia.

(continued in English)

I am informed that it will take 10 minutes. In 10 minutes you will get the proposal, as I understand it, in one language only though, in English.

(continued in Russian)

The distinguished Ambassador of Nigeria has asked for the floor.

Mr. ABUAH (Nigeria): I should like to join my voice to the comments just made by the distinguished Ambassador of Morocco on the text which has just been introduced by our colleague from Australia. Like the Ambassador of Sri Lanka, I am aware that some of us have not received copies of this text, and I believe it is normal for us to have a text before us before we can have any informal consultations on it.

But beyond that, I believe I can say that the proposal about the APLs is very interesting. The damage caused by APLs to our structures back in the continent of Africa, destruction of lives and property, is immense. The distinguished Ambassador of the United Kingdom has pointed to some of these effects. It is a proposal about how to put an end to the carnage. We support that, but our capitals - in my case, our capital in Abuja - will have to pronounce themselves on the text before we can proceed. I do not know whether informal consultations on the text as read out by the distinguished Ambassador of Australia can do very much at this stage. I wonder if time should not be allowed for Governments and representatives of Governments gathered here to get copies of the text, refer it to Government, and return to the CD for consultations about the way forward.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Russian): I thank the distinguished representative of Nigeria. If I understood his comment correctly, he suggests that we should not hold an informal meeting now but that we should give Governments an opportunity to study this proposal introduced by Australia. I give the floor to the distinguished representative of Nigeria.

Mr. ABUAH (Nigeria): Maybe I am partly responsible for the misunderstanding. While it is important for my Government to have a chance to look at this text and pronounce itself on it and convey appropriate instructions to us, we do not stand in the way of the Conference and the informal meeting to consult on the draft decision. But as far as Nigeria is concerned, we do not have any instructions to consider it because our Government has not even seen it.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Russian): I thank the distinguished Ambassador of Nigeria, who has clarified his position. As I understand it, he is not objecting to the holding of an informal meeting. I give the floor to the distinguished Ambassador of Cuba.

Mr. AMAT FORES (Cuba) (translated from Spanish): Reflecting on the proposal being discussed at the moment, we are asking ourselves, and we wish to ask the Chair and the rest of the participants: why are we going to embark on a discussion of one proposal when we have also been studying others? There are proposals from the representative of Iran, from the representative of Egypt, and from several other countries, and suddenly we cast aside those other proposals and start considering the one formulated today by the distinguished representative of Australia. So from a procedural point of view, what happens to the other proposals? What is our situation with regard to the other proposals? Why are we discussing this one in this way and not the others? This is a question we are asking ourselves and we are thinking that perhaps we could have some clarification on it so as to understand the step we are going to take.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Russian): I thank the distinguished representative of Cuba for his statement and the question he asked. The answer is very simple, because the distinguished representative of Australia has made his proposal and has made an official proposal for the immediate holding of consultations on this question. That is precisely why the President has raised this question before the entire membership of the Conference. As for other questions, I can inform distinguished delegates that at yesterday's Presidential consultations all these questions were raised and the discussion with the participation of the group coordinators showed that there had been no changes in the positions of the groups and that unfortunately there were no points of convergence on these questions. In this connection these questions are not being proposed and have not been proposed by any of the coordinators for urgent discussion. And the President is not proposing them either, in view of the situation. As for the proposal from Australia, this is a new proposal which was made at this meeting with a proposal for immediate consultations on it.

We are trying to reach a decision on this specific proposal. I made a proposal as to how in practice we should implement the Australian proposal. Several speakers have said that unfortunately they have no instructions and they have their doubts about the outcome of such consultations, but even so they do not object to holding such consultations. In these circumstances, once again I ask the same question. If nobody objects, then we have to follow the proposal which was made by the distinguished representative of Australia. If anybody objects, then obviously we won't have consensus and we can't hold anything. But since nobody has objected, what else can we do but follow the proposal made by the distinguished representative of Australia? The situation is very simple, it seems to me.

The distinguished Ambassador of Morocco has asked for the floor.

Mr. BENJELLOUN-TOUIMI (Morocco) (translated from French): Thank you, Mr. President, for that explanation, which has clarified things. I would just like to say that the Ambassador of Australia has made a proposal. I will make a second one. I would like to include the efficiency of the methods of work of this Conference in the consultations that you wish to hold after the formal meeting, because quite clearly we are no longer respecting the traditions of this Conference. In more than two years I have never had before my eyes anything that we had to discuss immediately and come back to the plenary to take a decision. I do not remember this as being a usual practice in this Conference. I believe that the Ambassador of Australia simply suggested that we hold consultations after this plenary; he did not say that we had to come back to take a decision on his proposal. That is the first comment I would like to make. So if you want to hold consultations after this plenary and stop there, and then we will see, because as some people have pointed out, we have to go back to our capitals, and if there is a consensus I would be very happy to be able to tell my capital that there is a consensus in the Conference, and so what does Morocco want to do on this matter? I would be very happy to transmit that kind of message, but I would like to include in the proposal made by the Ambassador of Australia another question, that is, the efficiency of the working methods of this Conference. So we will have two questions to study in the informal consultations without going back to the plenary because, as I have already said, I have no instructions, and so if we come back to the plenary, we cannot have any positive results, so what is the point in coming back? That is why I asked you for an explanation of why we should come back to the plenary.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Russian): I thank the distinguished Ambassador of Morocco for his statement and the proposal he made. Have I understood correctly that the distinguished Ambassador of Morocco is proposing a slight change in the subject of possible informal consultations by expanding it and including an additional issue? Have I understood correctly that if this expansion does not take place, then he objects to the holding of consultations exclusively on the Australian proposal?

I see that the distinguished representative of Morocco is not objecting to the Australian proposal.

The distinguished Ambassador of India has asked for the floor.

Ms. GHOSE (India): I had not meant to take the floor in a formal plenary on this procedural debate. It was my understanding of your proposal, Mr. President, that if we were to convene in an informal meeting, as proposed by the delegation of Australia, we would necessarily have to reconvene to formally conclude this plenary session. Regardless, a formal conclusion of the plenary today would have to take place at some point, particularly as I believe this is the last time that you will be President and you will be handing over the presidency over the weekend. That will enable you to give your concluding remarks, so I think that in that sense there should not be an objection to a formal reconvening of the plenary to enable the President to make his concluding remarks, whatever they might be, related or unrelated to the discussions in the informal consultations. This was my understanding. I do not know whether we can solve questions so fast in this particular room, but we are all willing to give it a try.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Russian): I thank the distinguished Ambassador of India for her understanding and for her statement. The distinguished Ambassador of Morocco has the floor.

Mr. BENJELLOUN-TOUIMI (Morocco): I think that if that is the understanding, I have no objection to coming back to the plenary, but it would be more efficient that you make whatever statement you want to make now, Mr. President, because, as I told you, the result is obvious to me. We will listen, we will report to our capitals, but I am not sure that you can draw any other conclusions. It seems that what Ambassador Ghose is saying is that it is difficult in maybe one hour's time to do anything that would allow you to say something more than you have already prepared. But, of course, you are the President and I am a delegate, so you decide, as long as we have the understanding that Ambassador Ghose has just outlined.

Mr. AMAT FORES (Cuba) (translated from Spanish): Mr. President, first of all I would like to thank you for the explanation you provided about our earlier formulation, but in addition to the explanation you have given us, I have new doubts, because according to what you said, in the Presidential consultations that you held yesterday, there was no consensus on the other proposals, and my uncertainty, and my question, in that case is: was there any consensus about mines, to the effect that we are going to have consultations today, to take decisions and to return to the plenary to discuss the matter? Did they reach agreement and arrive at consensus on the question of mines? In our view this subject is on an equal footing with the other proposals that have been put forward. If there is no type of consensus on this we cannot see any reason for this haste in the specific case of the formulation made today by the distinguished Ambassador of Australia. So I am still assailed by these doubts, and I would really like some clarification on them.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Russian): I thank the distinguished representative of Cuba. Well, distinguished delegates, we have a dilemma. We have a proposal from the distinguished representative of Australia concerning the holding of immediate consultations. I still haven't heard a single voice against that, although I have heard quite a number of doubts expressed concerning the usefulness of holding such a meeting. I am in your hands. The President as such has no hidden agenda. I want to do my duty. I would like to hear advice from you as to what I should do. The distinguished Ambassador of Pakistan.

Mr. AKRAM (Pakistan): Perhaps it is time once again to go back to the lyrical praise which Ambassador Weston extended to you, Sir, at the beginning of this meeting. Certainly, we are in need of some poetry, if nothing else.

With regard to the Australian proposal, my delegation of course has no difficulty in entering into informal consultations, all the more so because I believe that it was the Pakistan delegation which was the first to propose, on 30 January, the idea of the creation of a special coordinator on the issue of anti-personnel landmines. However, I believe that it is the tradition of this Conference that we respect the views of all concerned, and I have no doubt that in any informal consultations which you convene, that tradition will continue to be respected and every delegation will have the opportunity to express its viewpoint with regard to the issue under discussion, so I have no hesitation in agreeing to informal consultations. That is the tradition of this Conference. If there are positions with regard to the formulation or with regard to other issues and other proposals, I am sure that every delegation will be within its rights to raise this in the course of the informal consultations, and in the light of those discussions, you will draw the appropriate conclusions or inconclusions, as the case may be. Then we can proceed further. Perhaps it would be useful to adjourn this meeting and convene in informal session where all views and positions can be aired off the record.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Russian): I thank the distinguished representative of Pakistan. Is the Conference prepared to follow that advice? I see no objections. Thus I will now suspend this meeting and in 10 minutes in this room I will begin open-ended informal consultations.

The meeting was suspended at 11.20 a.m. and resumed at 6.10 p.m.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Russian): The 764th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament is resumed.

Distinguished delegates, during the break important and I believe useful informal consultations took place on the proposal made by the distinguished representative of Australia which was put forward at this meeting. At the present time I cannot report that these consultations have led to any concrete result. As I understand it, they will be continued next week. I now intend to say a few words in the form of concluding observations.

When I took up my post as President of the CD, I fully realized the scale and the difficulties of the problems confronting the Conference, the solution of which must bring our forum to a genuine solution of the questions on the disarmament agenda, which have become ripe for multilateral consideration. In so doing I drew on the results which had been achieved by my predecessors as President in 1997, the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea and the representative of Romania in the CD. In particular, as you know, the agenda was adopted, intensive multilateral and bilateral consultations were held, which dealt both with the essence of the problems facing the Conference and with organizational arrangements for their consideration. I should like to express my sincere gratitude for the major efforts which were made by my distinguished predecessors.

As the representative of Russia, I must note that during the period when my country has occupied the post of President of the CD, important events have taken place from the point of view of real progress in the area of arms control and disarmament. A Russian-American summit took place in Helsinki, and the documents generated there on disarmament issues have been circulated at the Conference. The negotiations on the Founding Act between Russia and NATO were successfully concluded. A five-party agreement was signed on arms reductions in the area of the border between the former Soviet Union and China. The Convention on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons entered into force. Also during this period, the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2000 NPT Review Conference was successfully held, attended by many CD representatives. It seems to me these events show that it would be an exaggeration to project the difficulties which the CD has encountered recently onto the world outside this magnificent room. On the whole, the process of arms control is, as they say, "alive and well". We can only regret that the same cannot be said about the state of affairs in our Conference.

As you know, during my term of office as President, issues related to the adoption of a programme of work for the CD, both taken as a whole and each individually, have been discussed at the weekly Presidential consultations with the participation of the coordinators of the regional groups and China, and during my many bilateral contacts with individual delegations. Within the rigid framework circumscribing the work of the President of the CD, attempts were made to pursue any emerging possibilities for agreeing on a programme of work. I am grateful to the coordinators of the groups and all delegations for the activeness and perseverance they have shown in the search for acceptable solutions. During this period, the Conference had before it new documents such as the proposal from the delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran on the CD's programme of work, the proposal by Chile, Poland and Finland to appoint a special coordinator to conduct consultations on the most appropriate arrangement to deal with the question of anti-personnel landmines, the draft mandate submitted by Hungary and Japan for an ad hoc committee on anti-personnel landmines and the draft mandate proposed by Egypt for an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament, as well as other proposals.

I note with satisfaction that these and earlier proposals for organizing the CD's work have been thoroughly studied by many delegations, and intensive negotiations have been and are continuing to be conducted on them. But despite that, it has not been possible to reach consensus on the programme of work for the CD at this stage. I will not go into my understanding of the reasons for this situation - to do so might be improper for the President. I will say only that evidently we all have to reconsider carefully what we actually expect of the CD and what we can realistically achieve from it at this stage.

I must admit that in the last few days we were close to taking a small but practically important step. I refer to the establishment of the post of special coordinator on anti-personnel landmines, which is unequivocally supported by the Russian Federation as well. I hope that the efforts in this area will be pursued and that this matter will be resolved as soon as possible.

The question of further expansion of the membership of the CD also occupied its proper place in our consultations in the Conference. I can state, I think, that there is already broad agreement about the possibility of establishing the post of special coordinator on that problem. However, on this issue too there has been no tangible progress so far. I hope that everyone will agree with me when I say that resolving the question of expanding the membership of the CD must not be drawn out indefinitely.

I should sincerely like to express my warmest and best wishes to the new President of the CD, the distinguished Ambassador of Senegal, Mrs. Diallo. She can fully count on our support in the search for constructive solutions to the difficult problems facing the Conference. I should also like to express my gratitude to the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, Mr. V. Petrovsky, the Deputy Secretary-General, Mr. Abdelkader Bensmail, all the secretariat staff and the interpreters for their inestimable assistance in organizing and carrying out the work of the Conference. I thank all the delegations to the Conference on Disarmament for their active cooperation with the President.

(continued in English)

The next plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament will take place on Thursday, 29 May 1997 at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 6.20 p.m.

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.765
29 May 1997

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE SEVEN HUNDRED AND SIXTY-FIFTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 29 May 1997, at 10 a.m.

President: Mrs. Diallo (Senegal)

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I declare open the 765th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

I would like to make an introductory statement. It is a great honour for me to take up the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament on behalf of the Republic of Senegal. I would like to assure you that I will spare no effort to discharge the duties of the presidency during this difficult period which the Conference on Disarmament is going through. First of all I would like to express my profound gratitude to my predecessor, Ambassador Grigori Berdennikov of the Russian Federation, for the efforts and talent he displayed during his term of office. I would also like to tell him again how much I enjoyed my stay in his country as the Ambassador of Senegal. I am also grateful to the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General, Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, as well as the Deputy Secretary-General, Mr. Abdelkader Bensmail, and all the members of the secretariat for the wise and essential assistance which they are sure to give me.

The Conference on Disarmament is passing through a crucial period in its existence, and at present is in an uncertain situation in which the spirit of consensus that has always helped it to overcome obstacles which at first sight might seem insurmountable seems to have been overshadowed by the prevalence of suspicion in which the slightest proposal made by any country or group of countries is immediately questionable. I think this is especially regrettable because some countries such as mine, which have just been admitted as full-fledged members, intended to participate fully in the work of this body, which represented in their eyes the vigour and effectiveness which multilateral diplomacy should display. This participation in the work of the international community's sole multilateral negotiating body seemed to us to be all the more exciting because the Conference had achieved undeniable successes by negotiating and drawing up treaties and conventions which guaranteed still better the future of coming generations. I will simply recall the most recent ones - the Convention on Chemical Weapons and the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty.

Given those successes, we viewed the future as promising and we hoped that the Conference was not going to stop when it was doing so well but would continue to forge ahead and tackle the other important issues which had been before it since it was created, in the area of both nuclear and conventional arms, including anti-personnel landmines. Unfortunately, and we deeply regret this, the Conference on Disarmament seems to have become bogged down since the opening of this session in sterile considerations which have little to do with this body's wholly justified solid reputation of effectiveness and seriousness. Perhaps all of this, is, after all, just a tricky patch following the intensive efforts made last year to complete the draft comprehensive nuclear test-ban treaty. We would venture to hope today that reason will prevail and that the Conference, thanks to its usual wisdom, will find a dynamic consensus in order finally to adopt a programme of work duly taking into account the interests of all sides, the climate and political realities of the post-cold-war period.

I would be particularly reassured by such a development because I represent a country, Senegal, which is known for its spirit of peace and dialogue, a country which is a party to all the treaties and all the conventions drawn up in the area of disarmament; a country which gives priority to establishing brotherly and mutually beneficial relations with all States in its subregion and its continent, Africa, a country which has no intention, either today or tomorrow, of acquiring weapons of mass destruction; a country whose leaders consider that all the wealth swallowed up in research and development or the acquisition of such weapons would be better applied to development and the welfare of mankind as a whole. This is why Senegal, through its head of State, President Abdou Diouf, never lets slip an opportunity to praise the merits of the "peace dividend". This is also why Senegal welcomed the signature in Cairo, Egypt, of the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty. In the same context allow me here to commend South Africa, which unilaterally decided to divest itself of nuclear weapons. Finally, this is why Senegal joined 27 other countries of the G.21 to draw up a programme of action for the elimination of nuclear weapons (CD/1419) and remains in favour of establishing an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament within this Conference. We believe that the establishment of such a committee would not in any way prejudice the praiseworthy efforts undertaken by the nuclear Powers to reduce their nuclear arsenals. We welcome those efforts and urge their continuation. But we are not convinced that negotiations in the area of nuclear weapons should remain exclusively in the purview of the nuclear-weapon States. The involvement of the international community is essential because transparency and confidence are essential in such a sensitive area.

Another issue of particular interest to Senegal is that of anti-personnel landmines. We will not elaborate on the ravages wrought in our continent and elsewhere in the world by this veritable scourge. My country is participating in the Ottawa Process and we would like to take this opportunity to thank the Canadian Government for its welcome initiative. We consider that the Conference on Disarmament, for its part, could find appropriate machinery to study this question. As far as Senegal is concerned, we will join any consensus on this matter, as we will also join consensus on the way to deal with the other items on the agenda of the Conference. But what my country could not accept is that the Conference should try to ignore the question of nuclear disarmament, whose importance no longer needs demonstrating. Interesting proposals have been made in the Conference for a fair and equitable compromise on a balanced programme of work from which all members of the Conference could benefit. I hope that reason and wisdom will prevail to preserve and strengthen the Conference's credibility and enable it to achieve the breakthroughs which the international community expects of it.

On the speakers' list for today I have the representative of Sudan, Ambassador Sahlool. I give him the floor.

Mr. SAHLOOL (Sudan): Permit me at the outset to express the gratitude and appreciation of my delegation to address the Conference on Disarmanent on an item which is of great concern to my country.

(Mr. Sahlool, Sudan)

The Sudan has had to endure the ravages of a civil war since 1955, and although some major steps have recently been taken to achieve a final settlement of the conflict, by the signing of a peace agreement with seven rebel factions only last month, there is a lot to be undertaken before a final peaceful settlement is achieved. However, the Sudan has to deal with a more urgent problem, namely, the resettlement of the displaced persons in the areas under government control. The major impediment to the implementation of the resettlement programme and the rehabilitation efforts is the clearance of the mines which have been extensively planted in the conflict-affected areas by the warring factions during the civil war.

The Sudan ranks third after Angola and Mozambique in suffering from the scourge of landmines in the African continent. It has initiated a demining campaign, and is therefore keen to solicit international assistance for its mine clearance activities. In this respect, I am happy to report that a number of donors, including some in the United States, have pledged support for the demining activities, which we hope should commence where hostilities have ceased definitively. Talks have commenced between the Government of the Sudan and the Mine Clearance and Policy Unit (MCPU) of the United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA). However, and as with all DHA-supported programmes, the capacity to implement is dependent on support from the international donor community. The Sudan therefore calls upon the international community to give the MCPU of the DHA every possible assistance to enhance its capacity to be able to monitor the prohibition of landmines in all international conflicts.

We believe that this Conference should be instrumental in keeping the international debate on a global ban on landmines on track, and it is encouraging to note that the problem of anti-personnel landmines is on the agenda of this session. In this respect, the Sudan welcomes the proposal to establish an ad hoc committee on a "ban on anti-personnel landmines" and pledges its cooperation in negotiating an effective, legally binding international agreement to this end. The Sudan is also ready and willing to participate in the preparatory meetings leading to the forthcoming Ottawa Conference, which will hopefully commit those countries which have expressed their readiness to accept some constraints on the kind of landmine that can be used or sold, taking into consideration paragraphs 69 and 70 of the section on "Disarmament and international security" of the Final Document adopted at the Twelfth Ministerial Conference of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries held in New Delhi on 7 and 8 April 1997. We are happy to note that the United Kingdom, under its new Administration, is ready to join the ranks of these countries, and hope that other major Powers will follow this commendable example.

We hope that, in time, an agreement which may be concluded at this juncture will become a truly global arrangement enabling the international community to verify those countries which persist in providing the parties to the various conflicts with the financial and technical means to secure and plant mines, and apply all means of pressure at its disposal to persuade them to desist from producing and providing the mines. We believe that the

Conference should give this problem top priority in its agenda, and should not be deflected from pursuing this course by any other priorities, since it is of prime importance to many countries in Africa, and could contribute significantly to their stability and peaceful development.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of the Sudan for his statement. Would any other delegations like to speak at this stage? I give the floor to the Ambassador of Turkey.

Mr. ULUÇEVIK (Turkey): Thank you very much, Madam President, for giving me the floor. Since it is not my intention this morning to speak on the substance of the subjects on our agenda, I venture to reserve my words of congratulation upon your assumption of the presidency of the CD for a later stage of our work when I address the substantive issues.

If you will allow me, I shall dwell on a first-ever event in the history of the United Nations which occurred last week with a direct bearing on the conduct of the CD's business in safety and without hindrance, as well as on the safety and safe movement, within the United Nations premises in Geneva of the members of the delegations to the CD, together with those of staff of the secretariat.

A week ago today, on 22 May, as we were sitting in this very chamber for a formal plenary meeting, at around 11 a.m., some 200 persons or more, brandishing banners belonging to the PKK terrorists, broke into the Palais des Nations and forced their way into the first floor of the main building, smashing glass doors at door 4. They came as close as within 40 or 50 metres of the Salle du Conseil. They occupied the United Nations premises for about five hours. In the course of the episode, the intruders burned the flags of two United Nations Member States who are, at the same time, members of the CD.

Despite the indisputable fact that their abhorrent actions constituted an offence in the form of violation of United Nations property and established rules, with regard to the inviolability of international premises and the security of United Nations personnel and diplomats, the demonstrators were able to perpetrate their attack with impunity. As announced later by the United Nations Geneva Office, the demonstrators were escorted by United Nations security personnel and Swiss police out of the United Nations premises.

Up until this moment we have not yet heard anything from any relevant authority, international or local, as to what legal action has been initiated against those who have actually committed an outright offence, to say the least, by forcibly breaking into the United Nations premises and occupying them for several hours.

Following the despicable event, the United Nations Geneva Office issued a statement expressing satisfaction that the work of the United Nations was not affected, and that the staff continued to fulfil their duties.

Yet I, in my capacity as Permanent Representative of the Republic of Turkey, both to the United Nations Geneva Office and to the Disarmament Conference, was rendered unable to fulfil my duties in the CD on that particular day because of the incident.

We, in Turkey, say that there is always a good in every evil. As a matter of fact, the ominous event of last week has brought to the light of day the fact that there is an urgent need for the implementation of effective security measures for the protection of the inviolability of the United Nations Geneva Office's premises, where the CD is also seated, and to ensure the safety of the United Nations personnel, as well as that of diplomats of Member States of the United Nations and the CD.

Therefore, Madam President, in the light of last week's event, I request you to convey to the distinguished Director-General of the United Nations Geneva Office and, through him, to the authorities of the host country, our concern about the security situation in and around the United Nations Geneva Office premises, together with our request that adequate effective measures be taken to ensure the inviolability of the United Nations Geneva Office and other United Nations specialized agencies' premises, as well as the safety of the representatives of the Member States and United Nations personnel.

I entertain the hope that, as a result of prompt action to reinforce the security measures, anything in the nature of last week's event will not recur in the future.

Any delay in taking necessary preventive action, I am afraid, may give rise to new attacks on the United Nations premises, this time maybe with more nefarious consequences.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Turkey for his statement, and in this connection I would like to recall that this question was raised yesterday during the Presidential consultations by the Coordinator of the Western Group. The Secretary-General of the Conference, in his capacity as Director of the United Nations Office at Geneva, had occasion to explain the situation yesterday, to give an assurance that no effort would be spared in the future to avoid a repetition of this type of highly regrettable incident. Moreover, the Director-General has also informed me that this morning he would be having a meeting with the Chairman of the Diplomatic Committee and with representatives of the host country authorities in order to examine the situation as a whole and to draw all the necessary conclusions from the incident which occurred last Thursday, and to avoid a repetition.

I give the floor to the representative of Sri Lanka.

Mr. GOONETILLEKE (Sri Lanka): I have asked for the floor following the statement made by the distinguished Ambassador of Turkey. The incident referred to by him was indeed a very serious development. It should not have occurred, but since it has, I think appropriate steps should be taken by the United Nations Office in Geneva, as well as the host Government, with a view to preventing such developments in the future. At the same time, I would like also to mention that there are at least a number of missions which can be described as vulnerable due to various situations. It is also to be noted that the grounds in front of the United Nations Office are generally used by demonstrators coming from various parts of the world to hold demonstrations, and on certain occasions we see thousands taking part in such demonstrations. Fortunately, so far, such demonstrations have been peaceful, but now a precedent has been created and there can be situations where other demonstrators, too, could be emboldened by the incident described by the Ambassador of Turkey, and they may, too, try to develop their own tactics with a view to gaining entry into the building, as well as into diplomatic missions in Geneva. It is, therefore, necessary for the United Nations, as well as for the host Government, to look into this matter carefully, and my delegation is pleased to hear that measures are already being taken to discuss this matter. It is the hope of my delegation that the missions will be informed of the measures taken by the authorities concerned after the discussions are completed so that we can rest assured that there will be no repetition of what happened last Thursday.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Sri Lanka for his statement and I think I can assure him that the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva will inform all diplomatic missions of any measures which are decided on. Are there any other delegations which would like to take the floor? I see none.

I would like to inform you that the consultations commenced by my predecessors about the programme of work of the Conference are continuing. I have detected a resolve, which I think is shared by all, not to spare any effort to break the current deadlock. However, I think that we need a little more time in order to define the incipient consensus on the subject. I would therefore like to appeal to all delegations to display a spirit of compromise in order to enable the Conference to embark on its substantive work. Obviously my efforts will also focus on how the Conference can deal with the important question of the expansion of the membership of the Conference.

I give the floor to the representative of Germany.

Mr. SEIBERT (Germany): Madam President, I should first like to congratulate you on the assumption of the presidency of the Conference. My delegation fully trusts in the leadership you will display in this Conference, and we fully share the concerns expressed in your opening statement. I should like to assure you of the full support of my delegation. With regard to the question we have on hand - and, in particular, I am referring to the text which emerged from our last consultations - my delegation would like to know where the real difficulties lie, because this is a text which amounts to a mere procedural decision, a decision to appoint a special coordinator on anti-personnel landmines, an idea which, I have learned, has been around for a couple of months, and we had hoped that today we would be able to have a consensus on this paper. If this is not the case, then I should like to ask, through you, whether it is possible to consider this draft text as adopted ad referendum, which would give an opportunity to those delegations which might not have instructions to come in at a later stage, and permit us to proceed with our work. If this does not rally consensus, then I would like to ask you whether we could meet in an open-ended informal meeting to find out where the difficulties lie, in order to accelerate our work here in line with what you have said in your opening statement and, hopefully, we might be able to go ahead with this matter even before the next plenary. So, please could we find out whether it is possible to accelerate this? Clearly, if we are not able to start with consultations in the month of June, then we will probably lose the whole month of July, because it will be difficult for the coordinator to get the appropriate counterparts for his consultations, and the whole matter would be delayed until at least August or even later. So all that we are asking is to find out whether we can exert more effort and goodwill in order to move ahead on this matter.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Germany for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I wish to refer to yesterday's Presidential consultations, during which we took stock of the situation on this draft decision. One group said that it needed more time to reach a common position, especially as some members are still awaiting instructions from their capitals. Therefore there was no consensus. The President remains at the disposal of the Conference in order to work in the direction that is desired by its members.

I give the floor to the representative of Finland.

Ms. VUORENPAA (Finland): Madam President, I too would like to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the CD, and I wish to assure you of the full cooperation of the delegation of Finland. I fully support what was just said by the distinguished Ambassador of Germany, and it is the view of the delegation of Finland that this issue is very urgent and that the CD should be able to make a decision on this issue as soon as possible. As you will remember, we came very close to an agreement last week and we would not like to waste what was achieved. We too propose, if there is no objection in this room, that we should continue consultations as soon as possible, preferably today.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Finland for her statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I give the floor to the representative of Chile.

Mr. BERGUÑO (Chile) (translated from Spanish): Madam President, we wish to associate ourselves both with the words of praise and satisfaction voiced by some delegations with regard to your taking the Chair and with statements concerning your intention to solve our problems at the pace required and to stress in particular that the point made by Germany is a possible way out. I understand from what you said, Madam, that there are still groups that might have some difficulty in adopting a common position. I think that logic in our consultations should be directed, should move ahead, in the procedural direction that has been suggested, and in the context of that principle it does not seem to me to be appropriate to operate with a group logic but instead, as indicated by the distinguished representative of Germany, we should move forward ad referendum on this and other matters, as soon as possible, and ask those delegations that are still awaiting instructions to indicate what their difficulties are.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Chile for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I would like to call on the Ambassador of Morocco.

Mr. BENJELLOUN-TOUIMI (Morocco) (translated from French): Madam President, allow me to say how happy I am to see you take up the Chair of the Conference on Disarmament. As I have had occasion to tell you, I would have preferred you to be President at a much happier moment in the work of the Conference, but I am sure that your experience and your diplomatic skill will enable you to carry out our work successfully. I wish you every success and you may depend on the cooperation of my delegation. I wish to say that my delegation has no objection to consultations being held. I merely wish to suggest that, in order to improve the climate in this Conference, it would be useful if, while discussing the Ambassador of Australia's proposal, we could also address all the other issues connected with the programme of work of the Conference.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank Ambassador Benjelloun-Touimi for his statement and the kind words he addressed to me. I wish to call on the representative of Nigeria.

Mr. FASEHUN (Nigeria): Madam President, I join previous speakers to congratulate you on assuming the presidency of this very important body. Last week, a proposal was tabled; it was amended; both the proposal and the amendments have been forwarded to our authorities. Yesterday, as recounted by you, during consultations, there was no consensus on the amended text. Again, we have been asked what are the difficulties. We have been asked to hold consultations, to which we are not opposed. But it seems an unusual proposal, as suggested just now, that maybe the groups should be dissolved. I don't know whether the dissolution of the groups should be on this particular issue or perhaps on all issues. That would be quite welcome, of course. It would just allow us to take different positions without the mediating and moderating influence of the groups. We would then see how the CD would be able to do its work. Maybe others have a magic wand to wave away the differences amongst 61 member States of the CD who, in all their rights, are sovereign and who, according to the rules of procedure, should decide one way or the other how the house should move. But coming back to the issue before us, we wish to state that we are still awaiting the instructions of our authorities. And I might add, every new draft will have to be sent back to our headquarters for decision. So we are not opposed to holding consultations. Whatever may be the result of that consultation will be sent to our authorities, and they will take their time to convey instructions to us. Let me emphasize again that every new draft will be sent back to our headquarters for instructions. So it is reasonable to suggest that the paper of last week will be considered first. Let the various delegations be given time to react to the proposals. As you said, we may be near what you call incipient consensus. I would just say, let us put "incipient" and "consensus" in brackets. We shall not comment on what is called procedural questions. For some countries, though, what is considered procedural is also quite important. But again, to emphasize, every new draft will have to be sent home, and when we get our instructions, these will be passed through our Group Coordinator, or if we have to state it here, it will be stated openly in plenary.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Nigeria for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. On my list of speakers I have the Ambassador of Poland to whom I give the floor.

Mr. DEMBINSKI (Poland) (translated from French): First, Madam President, I would like to congratulate you on taking the Chair of the Conference on Disarmament and to assure you of my delegation's full support in discharging your duties. As regards the problem which is now being discussed here, as co-sponsor of the proposal to appoint a special coordinator on the question of anti-personnel mines, my delegation would like to express its regret that this proposal, which was made more than two months ago, is still being discussed. As has been emphasized here, this is a procedural decision which prejudges nothing, but which would make it possible to move forward in the discussions and the preparations for negotiations in a specific area of very special importance. So in the deadlock we are in at the moment, I would strongly support the proposal made by the Ambassador of Germany a while ago to enable the Conference to move forward or to make some progress in this area; otherwise, there is also the possibility of holding informal consultations after the suspension of the plenary meeting, to enable delegations to speak at greater length on the text which was drafted here last week.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Poland for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I would like to give the floor to the Ambassador of Mexico.

Mr. de ICAZA (Mexico) (translated from Spanish): Madam President, I extend to you the congratulations of my delegation and assure you of its support. We have listened to your statement today and we are sure that you will guide our work for the benefit of the Conference on Disarmament.

A draft has been submitted to us to enable the Conference on Disarmament to deal with the issue of anti-personnel landmines. We have been told that this is a matter of procedure. I believe that in this case form is substance. My delegation and my Government attach great importance to the total prohibition of anti-personnel landmines. We believe that this is an urgent humanitarian matter. We are participating in and we are providing momentum to the Ottawa Process in order to arrive at a total ban on these indiscriminate weapons before the end of this year. We are not convinced that this Conference is the appropriate forum for discussing this matter, on account of its nature, and on account of the methods of work of the Conference. However, if there were to be consensus, and whenever that consensus is attained, we will not oppose consultations being held on a possible mandate and on the necessary arrangements to see how this Conference on Disarmament could deal with the issue. In the absence of such a consensus, we are not convinced that the Conference should deal with the matter of anti-personnel landmines, either from the substantive point of view or from the procedural point of view. To conclude, allow me to quote paragraph 19 of our rules of procedure, which states: "The work of the Conference shall be conducted in plenary meetings, as well as under any additional arrangements agreed by the Conference, such as informal meetings ...". There is no consensus on holding informal meetings on this matter.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Mexico for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. Now I would like to give the floor to the representative of Chile.

Mr. BERGUÑO (Chile) (translated from Spanish): I apologize for taking the floor again on this subject. It is just to dispel the idea that by waving a magic wand I might have wanted to abolish the regional groups that exist. I think that the Conference benefits from the groups and I think that benefit might be drawn from many more contract groups. What I do not think is appropriate is to interpret the rules of procedure as involving twofold consensus, that we need consensus among the members of the Conference and we need consensus among the groups. Consensus among the groups is consensus among their members, who are all members of the same Conference on Disarmament. I think that major statements have been made here that we should weigh up correctly. I think we should be grateful for all these statements insofar as they demonstrate a degree of flexibility that we urgently need, and I welcome the fact that the idea that there is an emerging consensus has been expressed by the distinguished representatives.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Chile for his statement. Are there other requests for the floor? I see none.

So we have heard several proposals. First of all the proposal to continue consultations on anti-personnel landmines. There is also a proposal to pursue consultations on the entire programme of work. Certain delegations are not opposed to the holding of consultations, but have already warned that any proposal made would have to be referred to their capitals for instructions. Lastly, there are delegations that say they would not oppose a consensus if one were reached for the holding of consultations. So I would like to be able to say that it appears to me that the Conference would wish us to hold informal consultations after the adjournment of the official plenary meeting.

I give the floor to the Ambassador of Mexico.

Mr. de ICAZA (Mexico) (translated from Spanish): Madam President, forgive me for interrupting you. Perhaps I didn't express myself correctly and the interpreters were not able to follow me closely. I am not opposed to the holding of informal consultations. Nothing and no one can prevent delegates from consulting one another. I am opposed to the Conference holding informal consultation sessions on a subject which my delegation is not convinced is a matter for this Conference as long as there is no agreement and as long as there is no consensus. We have heard that there are delegations that still have no instructions and could not go along with a consensus. Therefore there is no consensus. Nothing prevents you, Madam, from consulting members informally, but not in the form of informal plenaries.

Sir Michael WESTON (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland): I wonder if there is not some confusion here. I think it is a confusion which is quite natural because of the fact that we, unfortunately, held the informal open-ended consultations last week in this room and it does make us all think that we are, therefore, holding an informal meeting. But I agree with the Ambassador of Mexico: for an informal meeting we do need consensus, but for informal consultations we do not. The arrangement last week was not a meeting. It was an informal consultation which happened to be held in this room. And so I think this is an important distinction because, really, if we are not even able to have consultations of that sort, open-ended consultations without consensus, we really have reached a situation in which the Conference is totally paralysed. But we have not reached that situation. We are able to decide to have open-ended informal consultations and they can, if it is the wish of the President, take place in this room in the way that they took place last week. So I would just make that point.

Mr. de ICAZA (Mexico) (translated from Spanish): After two years of systematic disagreement, it gives me great pleasure to be in total agreement with what Sir Michael Weston has said.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I too am delighted that we are coming to understand each other. Therefore, I would like to adjourn the plenary meeting and, in a quarter of an hour's time, to hold open-ended informal consultations in this room in order to make use of all the facilities available to us.

The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on Thursday, 5 June at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 11.15 a.m.

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.766
5 June 1997

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE SEVEN HUNDRED AND SIXTY-SIXTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 5 June 1997, at 12.15 p.m.

President:	Mr. Dia	(Senegal)

GE.97-61532 (E)

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I declare open the 766th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

First of all, on behalf of the Conference and on my own behalf I wish to extend a warm welcome to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, His Excellency Mr. Evgeny Primakov, who will be our first speaker. I do not believe it necessary to dwell on the personality and career of Mr. Primakov, who has occupied the post of Foreign Minister since January 1996. Suffice it to say that the Minister is a member of the Russian Academy of Sciences, that from 1977 to 1985 he directed the Institute of Eastern Sciences of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR, and also to recall that he occupied the very important functions of President of the Soviet of the Union of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR and member of the Security Council of the Soviet Union. His presence among us today testifies to the personal interest he attaches to our work and the importance that his Government continues to attach to the Conference on Disarmament. I am sure that we will all follow his statement with great interest.

Besides the Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation, I have on the list of speakers today the representatives of Turkey and Belgium. I invite the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, His Excellency Mr. Evgeny Primakov, to take the floor.

Mr. PRIMAKOV (Russian Federation) (translated from Russian): Allow me first of all, Mr. President, to congratulate you on taking up the post of President of the Conference on Disarmament and to convey to you as the representative of a friendly country, Senegal, our best wishes for the successful discharge of your responsible task. I would also like to convey greetings to the Secretary-General of the Conference, Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, with whom I have enjoyed personal contacts and friendship for many years. I thank Mr. Petrovsky and his deputy, Mr. Bensmail, for their efforts to ensure the smooth operation of the Conference on Disarmament.

I would like to begin my address on an optimistic note. We have all observed with enthusiasm the major shifts which, if the positive trend continues, are capable of leading to real international stabilization. Today we can say with assurance that such a possibility really does exist. I would cite the Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security between the Russian Federation and NATO signed at the Paris summit as one of these important shifts which have taken place recently. Its substance reflected the political will of the leaders of the largest nations in Europe and America to take into account each other's security and cooperation interests for the sake of stability in the world. In fact, this has happened for the first time on such a scale since the end of the "cold war".

This agreement was difficult to reach. I will be quite frank about that. Russia, as you know, has had, and still has, an extremely unfavourable attitude to the enlargement of NATO, believing that it can create new lines of division in Europe, which we had started to move away from rather emphatically during the period following the "cold war". It was for the very purpose of minimizing the negative effects of such an enlargement that Russia decided to sign the Founding Act. We will hope that the practical implementation of the principles and the "code of conduct" laid down in the Act will help to enhance security in Europe. We will be able to ascertain in the near future that our optimism is well founded. I have in mind the negotiations in Vienna to adapt the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe to the new post-confrontation environment in Europe. This adaptation should take place in such a way as to strengthen the security of the States parties regardless of whether they are members of military-political alliances.

European security is our most important priority, but not the only one. I cannot fail to mention a major achievement in a different region - the agreement on mutual armed forces reduction along the border between China, Russia, Kazakstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. The agreement sets ceilings for ground forces and combat and defensive aircraft within a 100-kilometre zone on both sides of these borders. The value of this agreement lies not only in the fact that it covers a border of truly enormous length. It creates a model for solving border issues, which are often so sensitive in the Asia-Pacific region.

And finally - this is the last of the positive shifts I would like to speak about loud and clear today before you, but it is by no means the least significant. The world community has achieved significant progress in the resolution of major stabilization problems at the global level. I refer to the outcome of the meeting between the President of the Russian Federation, Boris Yeltsin, and United States President Bill Clinton held in March this year in Helsinki. The Presidents did not merely and not simply confirm their commitment to nuclear risk reduction and the strengthening of strategic stability. They clearly outlined the path towards further reductions in strategic offensive arms. It was agreed that Russia and the United States will embark on negotiations for the START-3 agreement immediately after the START-2 Treaty enters into force. The goal is jointly to ensure that as early as the coming decade the nuclear arsenals of Russia and the United States will be reduced to about a fifth of their size during the "cold war".

This decision links up the ongoing processes in nuclear arms reduction with real prospects of progress in this area - in other words, it links up today and tomorrow. As you know, obligations under the START-1 Treaty are being implemented according to plan and ahead of schedule, in a process involving the United States, Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakstan alongside Russia. The next agreement between Russia and the United States of America, on reducing strategic arms by practically half - START-2 - is before the State Duma of the Russian Federation for consideration. We, that is the Russian Foreign Ministry, are striving for the ratification of this Treaty. The achievement of a substantive agreement with the United States to avoid the circumvention of the ABM Treaty will undoubtedly bring us closer to the entry into force of the START-2 Treaty. And this will, as is now clear, ensure the continuity of the process of nuclear arms reduction.

But whatever the importance of progress in reducing the nuclear arsenals of the two major nuclear-weapon States, this, as you can well understand, does not provide a complete solution to the problem of movement by all the nuclear States towards nuclear disarmament. I invite you to agree that the outcome of the Helsinki talks should give an impetus to "systematic" progress in this field, for which many States call, inter alia at your Conference on Disarmament. In this connection, I would like to dwell particularly on the important problem of reducing the area in which nuclear weapons are located. Acting together with its Belarusian, Kazak and Ukrainian friends, Russia has secured the withdrawal to its territory of all nuclear weapons left over after the disintegration of the USSR. The President of the Russian Federation has put forward the idea that all - and let me stress this word, all - nuclear States should keep their nuclear weapons only on their own territory. This step would objectively promote further strengthening of stability in the nuclear sphere.

Moreover, Russia firmly supports the growing process of establishing nuclear-free zones in different parts of the world: in Latin America and the South Pacific, followed by Africa and South-East Asia. I take this opportunity to reiterate our support for the idea of our Belarusian and Ukrainian friends to give Central and Eastern Europe the status of a nuclear-free zone. I note that arrangements for the establishment of nuclear-free zones in various parts of the world have gone a long way towards achieving one of the goals which the non-nuclear countries have been pursuing for many years - the provision of assurances concerning the non-use of nuclear weapons (what are known as "negative" assurances). It is known that in various statements Russia and other nuclear countries have provided certain assurances to this effect addressed to the States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. In addition, the mechanism of nuclear-free zones has established an entire system of agreements which also provide, in a regional context, of course, for assurances set forth in specific legal instruments. Such assurances already cover more than 90 States, and as the number of nuclear-free zones increases, this figure will grow further. We are ready to promote such processes.

It can safely be said that the above-mentioned initiatives and solutions, as well as many other breakthroughs, have not been generated and developed in a vacuum. A solid basis, or at least an atmosphere conducive to their adoption, has been and is being provided by your forum. I would like to note a major success of the Conference on Disarmament, the preparation of the global Convention on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. It paved the way for the first time in history for the elimination of an entire category of weapons of mass destruction. The Convention has entered into force and is reaching the stage of practical implementation. The Russian Federation is committed to the goal of the prohibition and elimination of chemical weapons worldwide. The President of the Russian Federation has submitted the Convention to the State Duma for ratification. Russian deputies have already expressed their intention of completing the process of ratifying the Convention before the end of this year, specifically this autumn.

In 1996, your forum concluded the next historic stage in its work - the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty was signed. That means that one of the priority tasks in the nuclear field is being solved. The Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty is a historic document which took almost 40 years to develop. Russia devoted great efforts to make that treaty possible. As early as 1986, we declared a moratorium on nuclear testing. We were later joined by other nuclear Powers. As a result, the treaty has not yet entered into force, but nuclear testing sites have already fallen silent. The number of signatory States of the Treaty is impressive - more than 140. However, a number of countries have still not signed it. They include States which possess considerable technical potential in the nuclear sphere. Their signatures are especially crucial. We urge the leaders of those States to acknowledge their heavy responsibility and to sign this most important Treaty.

In my view, ensuring the continuous dynamic development of disarmament processes is a historic task. Any pause in this sphere, especially a protracted one, may turn into a setback. In this connection, it would not be an overstatement to say that one of the keys to future stability is to be found in the chamber of the Conference on Disarmament. We would like to see the Conference maintain and enhance its positive negotiating dynamic. This is extremely vital to address the task of steadily reducing resort to the use of force and establishing a stable, democratic world order.

As to the immediate tasks faced by your Conference, we believe that in the nuclear sphere this means a ban on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear devices. Russia is ready to begin negotiations speedily on this issue here - right here in this multilateral forum on disarmament. As you know, the Russian Federation and several other nuclear Powers have already unilaterally ceased production of nuclear explosives. It is important that the instrument to be drawn up by the Conference on Disarmament should impose a ban on production of such materials on a universal basis, with the participation of both nuclear and non-nuclear States. This would be an additional instrument to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons in all its dimensions.

Another problem which can be actively discussed at the Conference is that of anti-personnel landmines. We share the concern of the international community about their irresponsible use. As early as December 1994, Russia introduced a three-year moratorium on the export of non-self-destructing and undetectable mines. We are considering the possibility of extending that moratorium, and I think a decision to that effect will be taken. We believe that the adoption of a new version Protocol II to the 1980 "Inhumane Weapons" Convention, the so-called "mines" Protocol, would be an important step. The main task now is to ensure the widest possible participation of States in that Protocol. We view the complete prohibition of anti-personnel landmines as a goal which would probably best be approached by means of a series of agreed time stages. With this goal in mind, it is necessary to continue negotiations and to do so specifically in the framework of the Conference on Disarmament. It has the necessary negotiating experience and comprises the main States concerned.

Here, with the participation of many experts in this hall, talks are also under way on the issue of verification of compliance with the Convention on the Prohibition of Biological Weapons. I would like to reiterate our firm intention to do all we can to promote the development of an effective and fair mechanism based on objective criteria.

In recent months the Conference on Disarmament has encountered difficulties in defining the organizational aspects of its further activities after an exceptionally intensive period in its work, namely, the completion of negotiations on the CTBT. I would like to express the hope that the present situation will soon be overcome, since the Conference cannot and must not slacken its activities. We are ready to exchange views in order to agree upon realistic priorities, and to harmonize positions constructively on the whole range of issues on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament. The Russian Federation will participate in the search for solutions which can ensure progress in the activities of the Conference and lead to further consolidation of its role as an important multilateral tool for strengthening global stability and security.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation for his important statement and for the kind words he addressed to the Chair. I now call on the representative of Turkey, Ambassador Uluçevik.

Mr. ULUÇEVIK (Turkey): Mr. President, in the absence of Ambassador Diallo, the current President of the Conference on Disarmament, I am pleased to take the floor while you are in the Chair as a representative of Senegal, with which Turkey enjoys friendly relations. I wish you every success and assure you of my delegation's support and cooperation. I wish also to pay tribute to the previous President of the CD, Ambassador Berdennikov of the Russian Federation, for his skilful efforts to achieve progress in the work of the Conference at a difficult juncture. Moreover, it gives me pleasure to extend a warm welcome to our new colleagues, Ambassador Giuseppe Balboni Acqua of Italy and Ambassador Günther Seibert of Germany. I look forward to working with them constructively.

I should also like to state that I consider myself privileged, though as the result of a mere pleasant coincidence, to address the Conference at the same time as, in the same meeting with, and following the important statement of, His Excellency Mr. Evgeny Primakov, the Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation, with which Turkey enjoys friendly relations and mutually beneficial cooperation. Foreign Minister Primakov's presence today in this Conference and the inspiring speech which he has just delivered illustrates anew the vital leading role which the Russian Federation continues to play in the global nuclear and conventional disarmament process.

May I avail myself of this opportunity to reiterate my Government's satisfaction with the signing of the Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security between NATO and the Russian Federation? It is no doubt the harbinger of a truly new era in international relations as we move towards the twenty-first century.

With its unique geopolitical position, situated at the crossroads of the East and the West, and the North and the South, together with its historical experience, the Republic of Turkey has always been compelled to attach primordial importance to security requirements. Yet, Turkey has always been, and still is, fully aware of the fact that arming cannot by itself guarantee a country's security. Improvement in international relations, as well as disarmament and arms control activities, forms a vital part of security. With this awareness, parallel to its efforts to improve political relations and enlarge economic collaboration, Turkey has consistently supported all initiatives aimed at arms reductions and disarmament, thus making disarmament and arms control one of the major components of its foreign policy.

Turkey is committed to the established ultimate goal of general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control. We believe that this goal must be pursued with realism through a comprehensive and balanced approach encompassing meaningful steps relating to both nuclear and conventional arms. Success in disarmament and arms control initiatives depends, in the first instance, on the creation of a political atmosphere that inspires confidence. Any disarmament or arms control measure, to be effective, must provide for undiminished security for the countries concerned, without upsetting the global strategic balance. It must provide for adequate and appropriate verification. Greater transparency in defence issues is indispensable in order to avoid uncertainty and insecurity. The geopolitical characteristics of specific regions should be taken into account in assessing the consequences of any given disarmament measure.

It is undeniably true that disarmament negotiations cannot take place in a vacuum. They are inevitably affected by the evolution of the international situation and by all the factors related to international security. From this perspective we can confidently assert that the international situation surrounding the work of the CD in 1997 is no less favourable than it was when the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) were successfully negotiated and finalized.

The end of the cold war alone has created an environment in which major achievements in global disarmament and non-proliferation have been made possible.

The first half of 1997 has been marked with meaningful developments in the field of disarmament and arms control.

The CWC entered into force on 29 April. I have the pleasure of informing the Conference that Turkey completed the ratification process and deposited the instruments of ratification with the United Nations on 12 May 1997. We would like to urge other countries which have not yet done so to ratify the CWC as soon as possible. In this connection, we took note of the encouraging messages to the first meeting of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons from President Yeltsin of Russia and the Russian Duma. Today's statement by Foreign Minister Primakov before this body is reassuring in this regard.

Moreover, I should like to state that we are encouraged by the progress achieved so far by the Ad Hoc Group tasked with strengthening of the BWC and we hope that the rolling text can be tabled by the Chairman at an early date, enabling more structured negotiations to commence in July 1997.

In the field of nuclear disarmament, the process establishing the CTBT Organization is fully under way.

(Mr. Uluçevik, Turkey)

The first session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2000 NPT Review Conference was held in April of this year. We welcome the joint statement made on that occasion by the five nuclear-weapon States expressing their determination to continue implementing fully all provisions of the Treaty, including those of article VI.

The summit meeting in Helsinki on 21 March 1997 between the Presidents of the Russian Federation and the United States was an important event affecting the disarmament and arms control environment positively. We welcome their agreement, among other things, setting out the basic components of START-3 negotiations.

It is against this background and under the prevailing propitious international climate that my delegation believes that it is high time for us to get down to concrete work before the end of the second session. Our success in achieving this will, to a large extent, depend on our ability to distinguish between the ideal and the feasible. Let us continue to aim at the ideal but let us also forge ahead with whatever is feasible.

It is true that the international community aspires to a world free from nuclear weapons. A global ban on nuclear weapons and their total elimination is the ultimate objective within the framework of general and complete disarmament. It goes without saying that the CD, as the sole multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament, has an important role in further enhancing nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation towards the ultimate objective. Yet as members of the CD, we should not lose sight of the realities of the international security environment. We should not make relatively or comparatively small but meaningful steps in the nuclear disarmament process a victim of overambitious expectations and approaches. My delegation is not convinced that a "blueprint" or a "timetable" for the achievement of the ultimate goal in nuclear disarmament would be more conducive to, or for that matter a viable alternative to, the existing bilateral reductions in nuclear arsenals. In our view, prompt ratification by the Russian Federation of START-2 and its implementation, and the negotiation of START-3, could successfully lead the way to a stage where the other nuclear Powers could join the plurilateral process to rid the world of all nuclear weapons.

Having accomplished its work on the CTBT, the CD must continue to play its role in non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament by starting, without further delay, its overdue work on a treaty to prohibit the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, otherwise referred to as the "cut-off convention" (FMCT) In 1995, an agreement was reached in the CD on the establishment of an ad hoc committee on this particular subject. Its mandate was defined in the Shannon report (CD/1299). Therefore, I appeal to all members to support the implementation of the CD's earlier decision and thus establish an ad hoc committee and begin negotiations on an FMCT.

(Mr. Ulucevik, Turkey)

We all recognize that nuclear disarmament is only one aspect of the general problem. Arms control and disarmament efforts require a comprehensive approach which should encompass conventional arms as well. In this category of weapons, anti-personnel landmines (APLs) has emerged as a topical issue which deserves attention and appropriate action in the CD.

In Turkey's view, the multidimensional issue of APLs entails the consideration of both the humanitarian and disarmament aspects. There are a number of ways to deal with the humanitarian aspect of the problem short of introducing a total ban on the use, production, stockpiling and transfer of APLs. To cite but a few of these: intensification of demining activities, provision of more demining assistance, victim rehabilitation and the development of demining and victim assistance expertise and technologies in mine-affected countries. Furthermore, declarations of moratoriums on the transfer of APLs should also be encouraged as an initial step in the right direction.

It is with these humanitarian considerations in mind that Turkey put into effect on 17 January 1996 a renewable three-year moratorium on the export and transfer of APLs, and is participating in mine clearance operations in the former Yugoslavia.

Less than a year ago, Protocol II of the 1980 Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) was revised, as a result of which the permissible scope for the responsible and therefore legitimate use of APLs has been delineated. Thus, as a first immediate step, global adherence to the CCW and to its revised Protocol II should also be encouraged. At the same time, in order to alleviate the genuine concerns of many States which foresee the continued operational use of APLs, a number of issues should be identified and dealt with before initiating negotiations aimed at a global ban on APLs. The following questions, not in any way exhaustive, need to be addressed in all their aspects.

Firstly, if the use of APLs is to be banned, how will States protect their frontiers in the absence of a viable alternative, not only against unfriendly neighbours, but also against irregular armed formations which operate across borders and other criminal groups, including smugglers? As part of a solution, interested parties should promote the launching of a multinationally funded project to identify and develop technologies for cost-effective non-weapon alternatives to APLs. We would like to see countries that vigorously pursue the goal of a global ban to apply commensurate resources, political and financial, to such a joint undertaking.

Secondly, what measures will be taken to curb the indiscriminate and irresponsible use of APLs, mainly by terrorist groups, which is at the heart of this problem? In this respect, the problem needs to be addressed concurrently in its demand and supply aspects. Special attention should be paid to the transfer of APLs. We would like to draw attention to the amended Protocol II of the CCW, which has addressed this important element of the problem by introducing the rule that no mine should be transferred to any recipient other than a State or its agent or agencies.

(*Mr. Uluçevik, Turkey*)

Thirdly, what will be the elements of a verification regime that would be acceptable to all States, one which would be credible and at the same time strike a balance between effectiveness and intrusiveness? This is not a matter to be treated lightly, since our recent common experiences suggest that one of the most thorny areas of multilateral disarmament negotiations is to agree on a verification mechanism.

I believe it is abundantly clear from the foregoing demonstrative set of questions that issues related to the use, stockpiling, production and transfer of anti-personnel landmines fall within the competence of the Conference on Disarmament. In our view, the CD has the necessary experience, expertise and standing to find the right answers to such questions.

We, therefore, invite delegations not to object to the appointment of a special coordinator to engage in consultations to determine the most appropriate arrangements to deal with the question of APLs.

As will be recalled, Turkey was one of the 10 countries who abstained in the vote at the fifty-first session of the United Nations General Assembly on resolution 51/45 S calling for an international agreement to ban anti-personnel landmines. Turkey did so because of its overriding security concerns over such a global ban. In the view of the Turkish Government, absolute realism must prevail in working out an agreement on APLs, which must be of a universal nature providing for a phased approach towards the ultimate goal. A ban on transfers should constitute the first stage. We believe that our success on the issue of APLs will depend on our ability to reconcile the humanitarian concerns involved with those of security.

Turkey has always supported the concept of transparency in the military area. We consider that it is in itself a measure for building confidence that will reduce mistrust among States, both regionally and internationally. Transparency in armaments carries with it an idea of universality. It is, we believe, a question that is of interest to all countries.

With these considerations, my delegation calls upon the Conference actively to address the subject of "transparency in armaments", which is already an item on our agenda.

Turkey, in keeping with its policy of supporting initiatives to limit conventional weapons, applied for membership in the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) in 1992. I have today the pleasure of informing the Conference that on 25 April of this year, participating States of the MTCR invited Turkey to join this arrangement. Consequently, my country has started participating in regular meetings held in Paris.

On this occasion, I would like to touch briefly upon a worldwide phenomenon with dangerous consequences. Arms smuggling and illicit arms sales tend to destabilize the domestic political and social order of States and impair regional security. Nowadays a wave of cruel and blind terrorism endangers the social fabric of some States and the conduct of orderly international relations. Perpetrators of these heinous acts are assisted by the illegal flow of arms. We believe that multilateral disarmament efforts, including those in the CD, cannot and should not ignore this new form of the use of force with the support of clandestine and massive transfers of arms.

To conclude, we believe that the FMCT and APLs offer the CD the opportunity of making tangible progress in its work this year. We hope this opportunity will not be allowed to slip away.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Turkey for his statement and the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now call on the representative of Belgium, Ambassador Mernier.

Mr. MERNIER (Belgium) (translated from French): Mr. President, since my delegation is taking the floor for the first time this session, allow me first of all to congratulate you on taking up the post of President of the Conference on Disarmament.

For several years, Belgium has been profoundly aware of the humanitarian crisis caused by the proliferation of anti-personnel landmines. In this regard it takes pride in having been the first to adopt radical measures at the national level totally banning the production, stockpiling and use of and trade in these devices. Obviously, Belgium is in favour of any initiative of any kind which would foster a similar complete ban on anti-personnel landmines at the international level. Thus, it supported General Assembly resolution 51/45 S, a logical stance fully consistent with the joint action of the European Union, which "is committed to the goal of the total elimination of anti-personnel landmines and shall work actively towards the achievement at the earliest possible date of an effective international agreement to ban these weapons worldwide".

In July 1995 our Foreign Minister, Mr. Erik Derycke, who at the time was chairing the Conference on Demining here in Geneva, launched the idea of negotiations on APL mines at the Conference on Disarmament. This proposal is still on the table, and Belgium will always foster anything that could, to a greater or lesser degree, lead to its realization. In this spirit we accepted the proposal for the appointment of a special coordinator on anti-personnel landmines. As it stands, this proposal does not prejudge the terms of reference for the negotiations that could be undertaken. But for Belgium it goes without saying that in the context of the Conference on Disarmament too it is a total ban on anti-personnel mines which is the goal.

At the moment, we are being faced with the difficulties of all kinds encountered in the CD in connection with the launching of negotiations for a complete ban on anti-personnel landmines. Everything points to the fact that these difficulties will not be eliminated quickly, a state of affairs recognized with disappointment and regret by many delegations, including mine. The humanitarian crisis calls for a rapid response by the international community. We are convinced that this response could come from the Ottawa Process. Belgium supports this process unreservedly. It intends to contribute to it in a manner which is commensurate with its commitment and its conviction. That is why, when the Process was launched in December 1996, my

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Government offered to organize a follow-up conference in Brussels in June 1997, a kind of mid-point conference. I am instructed to inform the Conference on Disarmament of this meeting, which is now imminent. The countries interested in a complete ban on APL mines will meet in Brussels from 24 to 27 June 1997. Very extensive participation - quantitatively impressive, geographically representative of the scope of the problem and the interest attached to its solution - is already assured.

My country intends above all to move this process forward in practical terms. First of all it plans to do so through the adoption of a formal declaration which will unambiguously stake out the limits and objectives of the future negotiations - in other words, the salient features of the planned treaty. This will be first and foremost what paragraph 1 of resolution 51/45 S calls "an effective, legally binding international agreement to ban the use, stockpiling, production and transfer of anti-personnel landmines". The same declaration will announce the resolve of the participants to meet again at a diplomatic conference in Oslo next September for the final negotiation of this text on the already solid basis of work coordinated by Austria. In that regard I wish to pay tribute to the contributions made by Austria and Norway. Another fundamental element in this declaration is the confirmation of the resolve of the participants to complete this task before the end of 1997. The number of countries that will subscribe to this declaration will provide what I might call arithmetical proof of the credibility of the process and its vitality. This political declaration has been distributed in every capital, and therefore everyone is familiar with it.

Above and beyond these tangible contributions, the Brussels Conference is intended to maintain and broaden the already very extensive political support the process enjoys. It will be informed, inter alia, of the many recent regional initiatives to combat APL mines. Several eminent personalities will also have an opportunity to express their views on certain specific aspects, including the military usefulness of mines, demining or assistance to victims.

This is the message that I was asked to bring to the Conference on Disarmament. The urgent need to find a solution to the APL mine crisis is my country's sole motivation in this matter. Belgium will support any initiative which enables this objective to be attained in the context of the Conference on Disarmament as well. It will spare no effort to secure this total ban which the situation demands.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Belgium for his statement and the kind words addressed to the Chair. The representative of Kenya has asked for the floor.

Mrs. TOLLE (Kenya): Mr. President, allow me to express my delegation's appreciation for the manner in which you are conducting our work. Let me also pay tribute to your predecessor, the distinguished Ambassador of the Russian Federation, Ambassador Berdennikov, for having spared no effort in trying to ensure that there is progress within the Conference on Disarmament.

I have asked for the floor today in my capacity as Coordinator of the Group of 21. The Group of 21 is committed to see the work of the Conference on Disarmament commence immediately, and it is in this connection that the Group wishes to table a programme of work for the Conference for the 1997 session, which reads as follows:

"1. The Conference on Disarmament decides to establish:

"I. An ad hoc committee for agenda item 1, 'Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament'.

"II. An ad hoc committee for agenda item 3, 'Prevention of an arms race in outer space'.

"III. An ad hoc committee for agenda item 4, 'Effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons'.

"2. The Conference decides to appoint a special coordinator to seek the views of its members on agenda item 6, 'Comprehensive programme of disarmament', with special reference to the issue of anti-personnel landmines.

"3. The Conference also decides to appoint a special coordinator to seek the views of its members on agenda item 7, 'Transparency in armaments'.

"4. The Conference decides further to appoint special coordinators to carry out consultations on the issues of its expansion and agenda as well as improved and effective functioning.

"The Group of 21 continues to attach the highest priority to the establishment of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament under agenda item 1.

"The Group of 21 has presented on 14 March 1996 a proposal for the work of the ad hoc committee, as contained in document CD/1388.

"In this context, a specific proposal on a mandate for the ad hoc committee will be presented in the near future."

It is the desire of the Group of 21 that this document be circulated as an official document of the Conference on Disarmament and that this proposal be considered in open-ended informal consultations immediately after this plenary meeting.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Kenya for her statement and the kind words addressed to the Chair. The representative of South Africa is asking for the floor. You have the floor, Sir.

Mr. GOOSEN (South Africa): I regret that my Ambassador had to leave for another engagement and I consequently make the following statement on his behalf.

I extend my delegation's congratulations to you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. I also use this opportunity to welcome all of our new colleagues who have joined us in the Conference, and to thank the distinguished Foreign Minister of Russia for his important statement.

I have asked for the floor to make my delegation's position clear on the proposal for a programme of work for the Conference on Disarmament which was presented to us today by the Coordinator of the Group of 21. My delegation has agreed to this proposal for the CD's programme of work in a spirit of solidarity with the Group of 21, and because it deals with some issues which are very important to my country. There is also a very urgent need for the Conference to utilize every opportunity in its attempt to break the deadlock which has faced us since January.

As we, however, made clear in the Group of 21 during its negotiations on this proposal, our agreement to its presentation does not reflect a change in the South African Government's positions and policies on nuclear disarmament, and also not on our opposition to the establishment of "linkages" between any of the work which the Conference needs to undertake. Furthermore, it is incumbent upon me to state that the South African Government remains firmly committed to the proposals which it made on security assurances at the 1997 Preparatory Committee meeting for the 2000 Review Conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). We expect that, in accordance with the formal statement made by the Chairman of the 1997 PrepCom, specific time will be made available at the 1998 meeting to give more substantive consideration to this issue. The authorities in South Africa are currently reviewing their views on security assurances in the context of the proposals made at the 1997 PrepCom. My delegation's agreement to the introduction of the proposed programme of work by the Group of 21 should therefore not be seen as in any way changing the position which we adopted at the NPT PrepCom or our eventual position on the negotiations which will surround the proposal to establish an ad hoc committee for agenda item 4, "Effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons".

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of South Africa for his statement and the kind words addressed to the Chair.

As you know, intensive consultations are going on, both within groups as well as between groups, on the proposal to appoint a special coordinator on anti-personnel landmines as well as on the Conference's programme of work as a whole on the basis of all the proposals that have been submitted. I am in a position to inform you that during the Presidential consultations yesterday afternoon, I detected a will to continue the open-ended informal consultations concerning the programme of work of the Conference. Consequently, I propose that these consultations should be continued this afternoon in this room at 3.30 p.m. In response to the request made by the Coordinator of the Group of 21, everything will of course be done to ensure that this document becomes an official document of the Conference.

The Republic of Korea is asking for the floor. You have the floor, Sir.

Mr. HWANG (Republic of Korea): On behalf of the Western Group I would like to propose that the open-ended informal consultations take place after 4 p.m. because another meeting is scheduled for the Western Group at 3 p.m. this afternoon.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of the Republic of Korea. If there is no objection, I think that we can grant his request and hold the informal consultations this afternoon at 4 p.m. Would any other delegation like to take the floor at this stage?

The next plenary meeting of the Conference will take place on Thursday, 12 June at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 1.20 p.m.

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